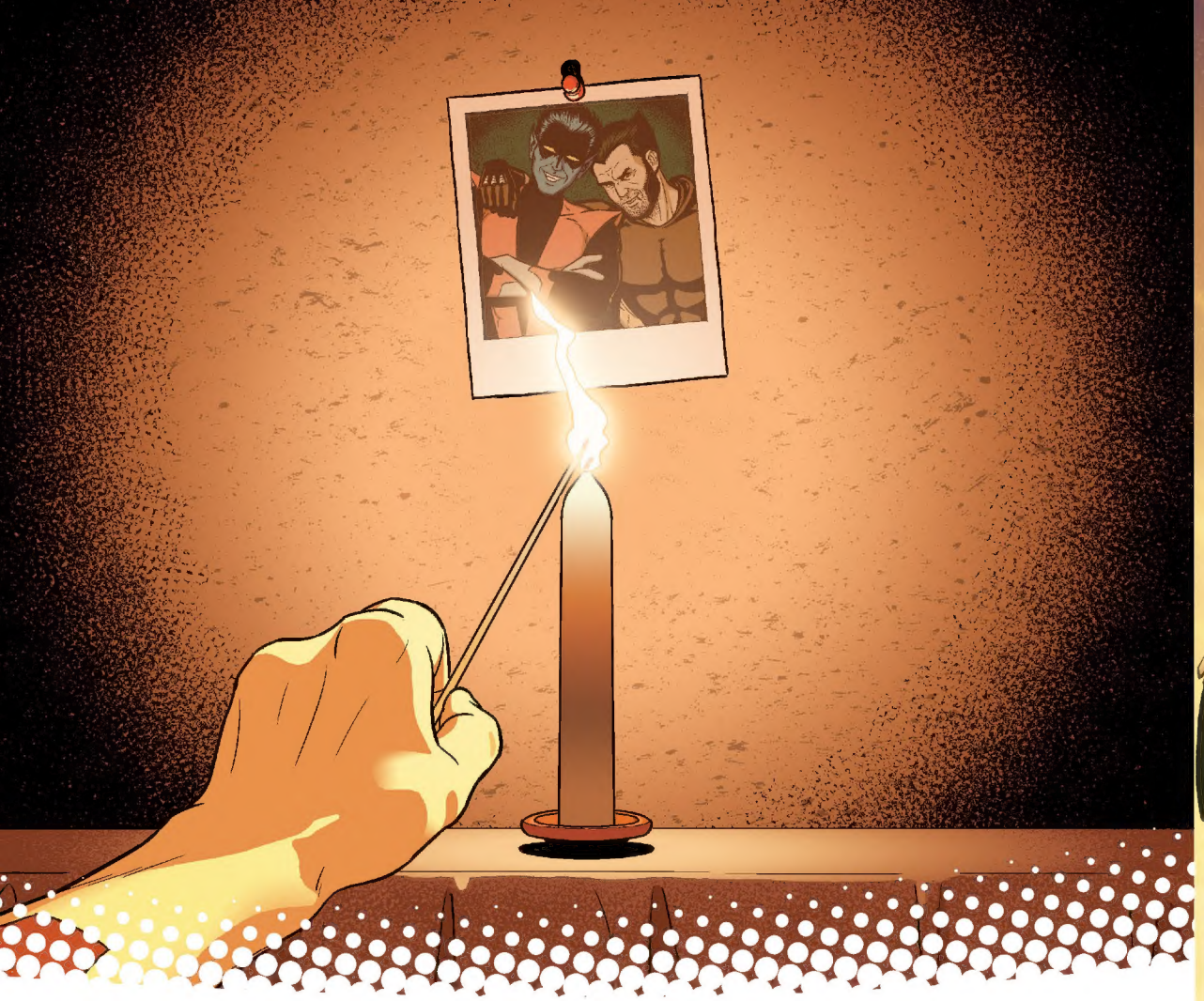
NIGHTCRAWLER
REBORN
CLAREMONT
MARVEL NOW!
NAUCK



"This is a fun and beautiful book." — ComicsRecap.com

"An introspective, highly emotional character piece." — ComicBookResources.com

NIGHTCRAWLER FIGHTS FOR HIS SOUL IN THE WAKE OF HIS BEST FRIEND'S DEATH!

Not long ago, Nightcrawler was dead. Now, Kurt Wagner struggles to find his place in the land of the living once again. But ever since his best friend Wolverine died, that struggle is much more difficult. Nightcrawler tries to honor Wolverine's legacy by carrying on as a teacher and an X-Man. But Bloody Bess has other plans for him — and Nightcrawler finds himself in over his head when the Shadow King attacks! Haunted by lost loved ones, Nightcrawler must attempt to overcome the darkness in his soul to protect those nearest and dearest to him — and prevent the Shadow King's influence from spreading across the multiverse! But will he take his one-man war too far? Nightcrawler has believed that Heaven cast him out because his work on Earth wasn't finished. Now, he may just finish it!

Collecting *Nightcrawler (2014) #7-12* — written by Chris Claremont with Marguerite Bennett, and illustrated by Todd Nauck.

T+

MARVEL

NIGHTCRAWLER

REBORN

CLAREMONT MARVEL NOW! NAUCK

NIGHTCRAWLER®

CLAREMONT
BENNETT
NAUCK
ROSENBERG

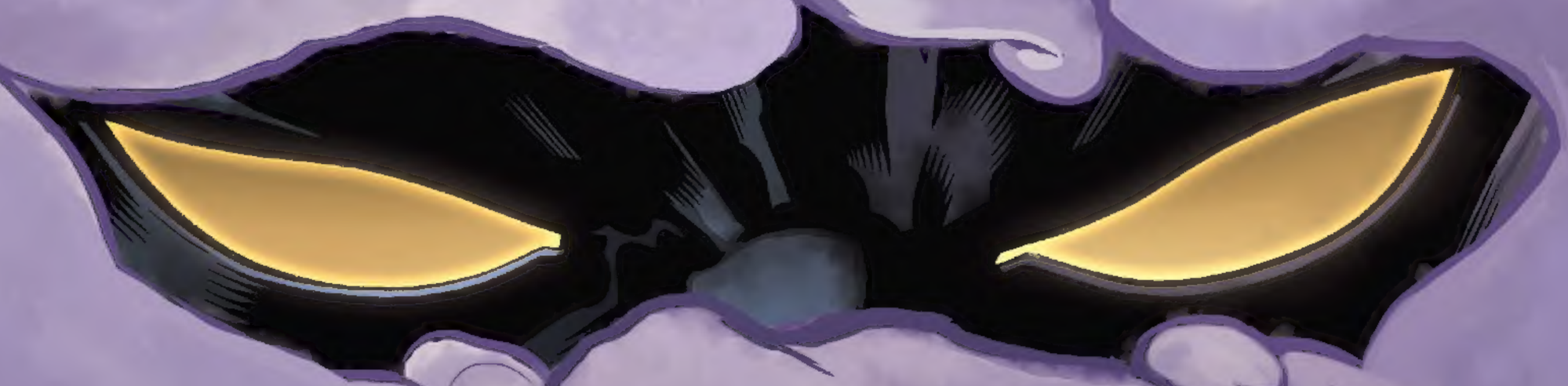
MARVEL

007

PREVIOUSLY IN...

NIGHTCRAWLER

RECENTLY RETURNING FROM THE AFTERLIFE, NIGHTCRAWLER HAS BEEN SEARCHING FOR HIS PLACE IN A WORLD FAR DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE HE LEFT BEHIND. BUT SINCE HIS RESURRECTION, NIGHTCRAWLER HAS, IN QUICK SUCCESSION, LOST HIS OPPORTUNITY FOR ETERNAL LIFE AND HIS FIRST LOVE. SHAKEN BY THESE TRAGEDIES, KURT NOWS FINDS HIMSELF REELING FROM ANOTHER: THE DEATH OF WOLVERINE.



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THE *JEAN GREY SCHOOL* IS VERY QUIET TONIGHT.

THE CLASSROOMS ARE EMPTY.

THE HALLS, SILENT BUT FOR THE SOUNDS OF NATURE.

WE WON'T BE TEACHING AGAIN FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

WE ARE IN MOURNING.

YOU SEE, WE DIDN'T START AS TEACHERS.

WE ARE *SUPER HEROES*, WE ARE THE *X-MEN.*

OUR STOCK IN TRADE IS SAVING THE WORLD, AND OCCASIONALLY ALL *CREATION.*

UNFORTUNATELY, THAT JOB COMES WITH A *PRICE--*

--THAT TOO MANY OF US OVER THE YEARS HAVE HAD TO PAY.

I AM *KURT WAGNER.*

AND MY BEST FRIEND IS *DEAD.*

I CAN'T SLEEP.

I KEEP THINKING, THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING I COULD HAVE, *SHOULD* HAVE DONE TO *SAVE* HIM.

NORMALLY, WHEREVER I WALK, MY *BAMFS* CLUSTER ALL AROUND ME.

TONIGHT, THEY LEAVE ME ALONE.

BUT THERE ISN'T. WHAT'S DONE IS... *DONE.*

FOR THAT, I AM IN THEIR DEBT.

'S FUNNY.

I FELT MUCH THE SAME WHEN *JEAN* DIED.

SHE WAS *PHOENIX,* THE QUINTESSENCE OF *LIFE ITSELF.*

AND THEN SHE WAS *GONE.*

ALIVE SOLELY IN OUR *MEMORIES.*

MY HEART BROKE THEN.

THIS TIME IS *WORSE.*

NEPAL.

IN OUR GRIEF, WE ALWAYS SEEM TO BUILD.

WE BUILD PYRES.

INDONESIA.

WE BUILD GRAVES.

CHINA.

WE BUILD TOMBS.

THE HOLOCAUST MUSEUM, WASHINGTON D.C.

WE BUILD MONUMENTS.

EGYPT.

WE BUILD MAUSOLEUMS.

INDIA.

WE BUILD PALACES.

WE BUILD HOUSES FOR THE DEAD, KNOWN AND UNKNOWN, LOVED AND UNLOVED.

WE BUILD CATHEDRALS, HOSPITALS, AND SCHOOLS--

--LIKE THE VERY SCHOOL I AM STANDING IN NOW.

TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER, FRANCE.

THE DANGER ROOM'S HOLOGRAPHIC TECHNOLOGY CAN BRING ANY REALITY IMAGINABLE TO LIFE--

--EVEN THE *WOLVERINE.*

'BOUT TIME YOU SHOWED, *ELF.*

Y'ALMOST MISSED THE *FUN!*

LOGAN RISKED EVERYTHING TO HELP BRING ME BACK FROM THE AFTERLIFE, AS IF HE KNEW OUR STORY WASN'T COMPLETE.

I THOUGHT WE'D HAVE MORE TIME TOGETHER.

DID HE KNOW HIS HAD ALL BUT RUN OUT?

DID HE EVEN *CARE?*

THE DANGER ROOM IS CULLING THESE SCENES FROM ITS RECORD OF MY MEMORIES.

THIS IS LOGAN AS I BEST REMEMBER HIM, LITERALLY A PRIMAL FORCE FOR LIFE.

YET, LOOKING AT HIM NOW, HEARING HIS VOICE, I WONDER IF I SHOULD HAVE LEFT WELL ENOUGH ALONE.

THE REASON *PROFESSOR XAVIER* GATHERED US TOGETHER WAS TO *RESCUE* THE ORIGINAL TEAM OF X-MEN...

...IMPRISONED BY THE SENTIENT PACIFIC ISLAND OF *KRAKOA*.

THE CREATURE CONSIDERED SUPER-POWERED MUTANTS ITS ULTIMATE SOURCE OF FOOD.

THIS IS NO PLACE FOR A LADY, *RED*.

MY *CLAWS'LL* CUT YOU LOOSE.

IT HAD ALREADY DEFEATED ONE TEAM OF *X-MEN*.

IT THOUGHT TO DO THE SAME TO *US*.

ITS ARROGANCE PROVED COSTLY.

CYCLOPS QUICKLY REALIZED THAT WE MAY BE ON OUR FIRST MISSION AS A *TEAM*...

...BUT WE ALL KNEW FULL WELL HOW TO USE OUR POWERS.

THE *FIERCEST* AMONG US PROVED TO BE THE OLDEST.

HE STRUCK WITH *PRIMAL* FORCE AND ABSOLUTELY NO MERCY.

HE DEALT OUT OBLIVION WITH A *GRIN*.

RISK MEANT NOTHING, AND DANGER EVEN LESS. HE'D ALREADY LIVED A SCORE OF LIFETIMES.

AS FAR AS THE WOLVERINE WAS CONCERNED, HE WAS GOING TO LIVE *FOREVER*.

IN *JEAN GREY*, LOGAN FOUND THE WOMAN OF HIS DREAMS.

HER HEART WAS ALREADY PLEDGED TO *SCOTT SUMMERS* BUT LOGAN DIDN'T CARE.

HE WAS A CREATURE OF *INSTINCT* AND THOSE INSTINCTS HAD NEVER PLAYED HIM FALSE.

BUT THEN, SHE BECAME *PHOENIX.*

SHE BONDED WITH A PRIMAL FORCE OF EXISTENCE--

--THE GIVER AND TAKER OF LIFE, ON A COSMIC SCALE.

SHE WAS HUNGRY AND CONSUMED A STAR.

KILLING SIX BILLION D'BARI ON THAT STAR'S INHABITED PLANET DID NOTHING TO SATIATE THE PHOENIX.

WE FOUGHT TO SAVE HER. AND FIND A WAY TO SET THINGS RIGHT.

BUT IN THE END, JEAN KNEW HER STORY COULD HAVE BUT ONE ENDING.

FACING THE *ULTIMATE* TEMPTATION, SHE SAID *"NO!"*

AFTER BYRNE

JEAN WAS THE *BEST* OF US.

THE LOSS WAS ALMOST MORE THAN LOGAN COULD BEAR.

YOU'VE DRUNK ENOUGH, MY FRIEND.

NOT HARDLY--

--WHEN MY FLAMIN' *HEALING FACTOR* KEEPS MAKIN' ME SOBER.

LOGAN, PLEASE LET ME HELP!

MIND YOUR OWN DAMN BUSINESS, WAGNER--

--AN' LEMME *GRIEVE* IN PEACE!

SLAM!

HE WAS A *HARDER* MAN AFTER THAT...

...DETERMINED TO MAKE SURE NO MORE OF HIS TEAMMATES WOULD DIE ON HIS WATCH.

OUR NEWEST MEMBER, YOUNG *KITTY PRYDE*, BECAME THE FOCUS OF HIS EFFORTS.

IT WAS DURING OUR BATTLE WITH THE *MARAUDERS* THAT HE ALMOST LOST US BOTH.

I WAS CAUGHT BY SURPRISE BY *RIPTIDE.*

NIGHTCRAWLER!

'PORT OUTTA THERE-- *NOW!*

LOGAN'S WARNING CAME TOO LATE.

BEFORE I COULD TELEPORT TO SAFETY, RIPTIDE PEPPERED ME WITH SCORES OF RAZOR-EDGED PROJECTILES.

KURT!

OH, STORM--! HE'S CUT ALL OVER--THERE'S SO MUCH BLOOD--!

I FEEL A PULSE. WE STILL HAVE A CHANCE TO SAVE HIM!

FIND ME A CLOTH--SOMETHING, *ANYTHING*--TO USE AS TEMPORARY BANDAGES!

I WAS BUT ONE OF *MANY* CASUALTIES, AMONG X-MEN AND MORLOCKS BOTH.

AMONG THEM WAS *KITTY,* WOUNDED PROTECTING *ROGUE* FROM ANOTHER MARAUDER, *HARPOON.*

I FELL INTO A COMA, WHILE KITTY LOST CONTROL OF HER *PHASING* POWER, FADING ALMOST TO THE POINT OF *EXTINCTION.*

WHEN I AWOKE IN *MOIRA MACTAGGART'S* RESEARCH FACILITY ON *MUIR ISLAND*, OFF THE NORTHERN COAST OF *SCOTLAND*...

...IT WAS TO LEARN THAT THE X-MEN HAD ALL BEEN *LOST*...

...SAVING HUMANITY FROM AN ANCIENT, MALEVOLENT FORCE, THE *TRICKSTER*.

IN A HEART-STROKE, OUR WORLD HAD CHANGED.

OUR FRIENDS WERE *GONE*.

CHARLES XAVIER'S *SCHOOL*-- AND THE TEAM OF *NEW MUTANTS*-- WERE UNDER THE CARE AND TUTELAGE OF HIS BEST FRIEND, OUR TEAM'S GREATEST ADVERSARY, *MAGNETO*.

KITTY AND I HAD LOST *EVERYTHING*.

SO WE DID WHAT X-MEN ALWAYS SEEM TO DO IN SUCH TIMES...

...WE STARTED *AGAIN*.

NEW LAND, NEW BEGINNING, NEW TEAM--

--*EXCALIBUR!*

AFTER DAVIS

OF COURSE, THE X-MEN WERE *NOT* DEAD.

AND IN GOOD TIME, BEST FRIENDS WERE REUNITED.

TOGETHER, LOGAN AND I TRAVELED THE WORLD...

AFTER ALL RED

...AND FOUGHT BESIDE OUR TEAM AGAINST *BASTION.*

THAT WAS WHERE MY *LUCK* RAN OUT.

PROTECTING THE CHILD CALLED "*HOPE,*" I WAS CRITICALLY WOUNDED BY BASTION.

AFTER CH.01

I MANAGED TO TELEPORT HOPE TO SAFETY...

...BUT MY WOUND WAS *MORTAL.*

I THOUGHT MY STORY WAS *DONE.*

I'M AN *X-MAN,* I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN *BETTER.*

I FOUND MYSELF IN *HEAVEN.*

ALL I BELIEVED-- THE BEST OF MY FAITH--WAS PROVED TO BE *REAL.*

BUT TRY AS I MIGHT, I FOUND I COULD NOT *ACCEPT* THAT REALITY.

I WASN'T SURPRISED WHEN THE X-MEN FOLLOWED ME.

WHEN THE MOMENT CAME FOR ME TO CHOOSE, I TURNED MY BACK ON *HEAVEN...*

...AND RETURNED WITH MY FRIENDS TO OUR WORLD, AND TO *LIFE.*

NOT LONG AFTERWARDS, LOGAN AND I WENT FOR A WALK THROUGH *SALEM CENTER*, VISITING OUR CLASSIC HAUNTS FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE.

I WASN'T YET *COMFORTABLE* IN MY BODY--EMOTIONALLY OR PHYSICALLY--

--SO I USED MY *IMAGE INDUCER* TO PRESENT A *"NORMAL"* FACE TO THE WORLD.

LOGAN, OF COURSE, HAD *OTHER* IDEAS.

WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?!*

SLAP

GIMME A BREAK, ELF--WE BEEN DOIN' THIS, *WITHOUT* THAT TOY, FOR YEARS!

WHY THE COLD FEET NOW?

MAYBE I'M NOT AS *ARROGANT* AS YOU, *JA?*

I DON'T HAVE YOUR *HEALING FACTOR.*

DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND THAT I TRULY *DIED!*

GET OVER IT.

BECAUSE NOW, MY FRIEND, YOU'RE *ALIVE.*

KRUNCH

EMBRACE THE *MAN* YOU ARE.

AND THE *WORLD* YOU LIVE IN.

YOU'VE MADE THIS TOWN YOUR *HOME.*

AND ITS PEOPLE, YOUR *FRIENDS.*

SHOW AS MUCH FAITH IN THEM AS YOU DO IN YOUR *GOD.*

JUST LIKE HIM, I BET THEY'LL *SURPRISE* YOU.

AND HE WAS *RIGHT.*

SADLY, *FATE* HAD DARKER PLANS IN STORE FOR MY FRIEND.

IS THIS THE PRICE DEMANDED FOR MY RESURRECTION-- A *LIFE* FOR A *LIFE*?

HOW'S THAT FOR *HUBRIS*? MY BEST FRIEND IS GONE AND I TALK ABOUT *MYSELF*.

THAT IS NOT THE WAY TO *HONOR* HIS MEMORY.

AND SO I WORK TO BUILD ONE LAST *HOUSE FOR THE DEAD*.

MY TESTAMENT IS NO TOMB, NO MONUMENT, BUT A HOUSE WORTHY OF WOLVERINE.

PLAIN AND COMFORTABLE, WORN COUCHES AND POOL TABLES--

--GIVE HIM A MOTORCYCLE-- TEN MOTORCYCLES, *AUS SPAßAN DER FREUD!*--

--A FRIDGE FULL OF BEER, SHELVES OF WHISKEY, MEAT COOKING IN THE OVEN, THE SCENTS OF LIFE, OF *BEING ALIVE*--

AND ENOUGH TIME TO BE HAPPY...

...WITH OUR FRIENDS.

ONLY *ONE* ELEMENT IS MISSING.

THE *CENTERPIECE* OF THIS CELEBRATION.

THE COMPUTER HAS DONE A *WONDERFUL* JOB...

...BRINGING HIS FRIENDS TO LIFE.

WHY WON'T IT DO THE SAME FOR *HIM?*

WHY CAN'T WE *CELEBRATE* HIS LIFE?

DO HIM THE *HONOR* HE HAS SO RICHLY EARNED?

THERE-- AT THE DOORWAY!

OPEN THE DOOR, LOGAN--

--SO YOUR PARTY CAN TRULY BEGIN!

BUT...

THIS ISN'T WHAT YOU WOULD HAVE WANTED, IS IT?

DAMN YOU!

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.

LOGAN ISN'T SOMEONE TO BE REMEMBERED IN THIS WEB OF *FANTASY.*

FOR HIM, FRIENDS SIT AROUND A MIDNIGHT FIRE ON THE HILLTOP OVERLOOKING BREAKSTONE LAKE.

YOU TOAST THE MAN AND TELL STORIES ABOUT HIM THAT MAKE YOU LAUGH, YOU DO *HONOR* TO HIS LIFE BY VOWING TO MAKE YOURS *BETTER!*

AND WITH THE DAWN, YOU START YOUR LIFE *ANEW.*

BECAUSE ABOVE ALL MY FRIEND LOGAN WAS A MAN WHOSE EXISTENCE WAS GROUNDED IN THE *REAL* WORLD.

NOT THIS FIELD OF *DREAMS.*

THE *WOLVERINE* TOUCHED SO MANY SOULS.

HE MADE MISTAKES AND TRIED HIS BEST TO SET THEM RIGHT.

HE FOUGHT FOR HIS FRIENDS AND TRIED HIS BEST TO MAKE THEIR WORLD A BETTER PLACE.

HE NEVER GAVE UP, AND NEVER BACKED DOWN.

HE WOULD GO TO THE WALL FOR THOSE HE CARED ABOUT.

HE WOULD EVEN FORGIVE YOU IF YOU COULDN'T MATCH THOSE STANDARDS.

ALL HE DEMANDED, IN THE END, WAS THAT YOU *TRY.*

KLAUCK AFTER BYRNE TRIMPE ROMITA JR. SILVESTRI McGUINNESS

IF YOU BROUGHT ME BACK TO LIFE FOR NO OTHER REASON, LORD...

...I PRAY IT IS TO PROVE MYSELF EQUAL TO THAT CHALLENGE.

LOGAN DESERVES NO LESS. HE WAS MY *FRIEND.*

A BEAUTIFUL SENTIMENT, KURT.

YOU READING MY MIND, RACHEL?

I'M A *TELEPATH*, IT'S WHAT I DO.

YOU THINK HE'LL FIND MY *MOM* UP THERE?

ABSOLUTELY.

YOU DON'T LOOK SAD.

I...HAVE *FAITH*.

BUT WE AREN'T UP THERE, ARE WE? WE'RE DOWN HERE.

NOT *DOWN* HERE. *STILL* HERE...

...AND I THINK...I THINK THAT WHEN YOU BUILD A HOUSE FOR THE DEAD, YOU MUST REMEMBER NOT TO BURY THE LIVING THERE AS WELL.

THE LIVING HAVE HOUSES AND WORLDS AND LIVES OF THEIR OWN.

I PITY ANYONE FOOL ENOUGH TO GET BETWEEN THEM.

THEN LET'S LEAVE THIS PLACE, YOU AND ME.

CLIMB A HILL, LIGHT A FIRE, SIT UNDER THE STARS, TELL SOME STORIES, WATCH THE SUNRISE.

NOTHING WOULD PLEASE ME MORE, RACHEL.

OUT OF THE HOUSES OF THE DEAD...

...AND INTO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING.

NEXT: REELED IN!

NIGHTCRAWLER

CLAREMONT
NAUCK
ROSENBERG

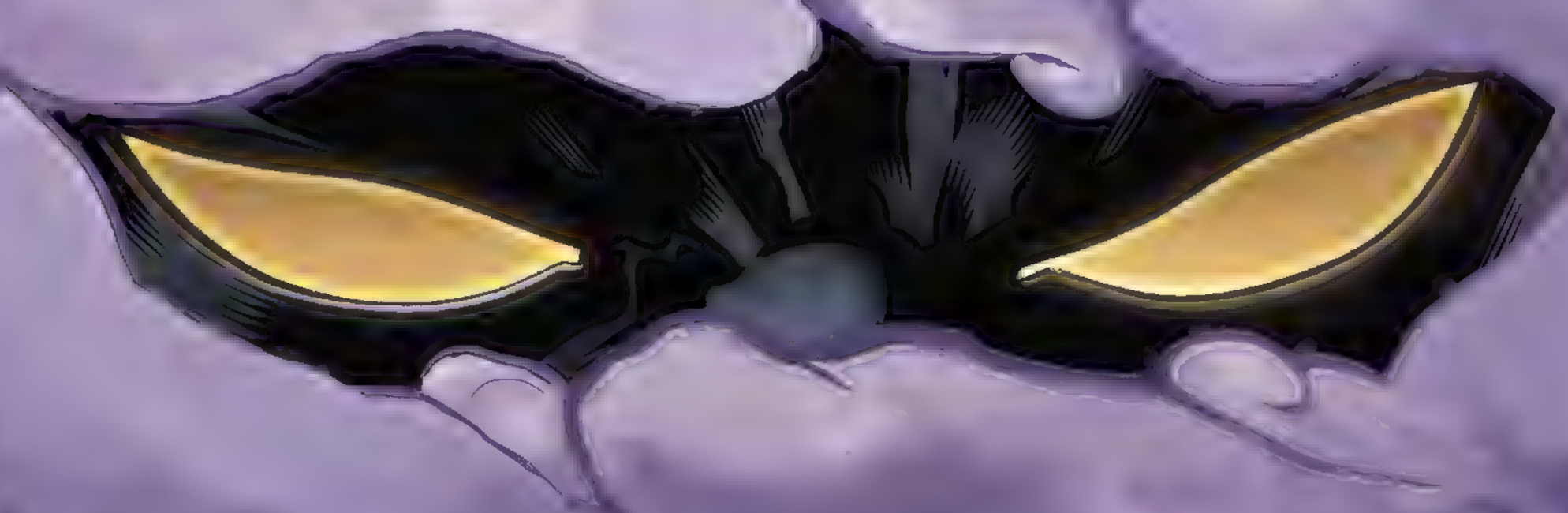
008

MARVEL

PREVIOUSLY IN...

NIGHTCRAWLER

RECENTLY RETURNING FROM THE AFTERLIFE, NIGHTCRAWLER HAS BEEN SEARCHING FOR HIS PLACE IN A WORLD FAR DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE HE LEFT BEHIND. COPING WITH THE RECENT DEATH OF HIS FRIEND, WOLVERINE, NIGHTCRAWLER MUST DO SO WITHOUT THE GUIDANCE OF ONE OF HIS CLOSEST CONFIDANTS. AND WITH THE RECENT ACTIONS OF THE CRIMSON PIRATES PUTTING THE LIVES OF HIS STUDENTS AT RISK, NIGHTCRAWLER WILL HAVE TO FIND HIS FOOTING QUICKLY, OR RISK LOSING EVEN MORE.



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THE JEAN GREY SCHOOL.

IT'S STRANGE, EVEN AFTER THE DEATH OF A DEAR FRIEND...

...HOW QUICKLY THINGS GET BACK TO NORMAL.

DEATH IS BUT A MOMENT IN THE GREAT SCHEME OF THINGS. REGARDLESS OF THE LOSS...

...OF HOW DEEPLY WE MAY FEEL HURT...

...LIFE GOES ON.

WE ARE TEACHERS.

WE HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES TO OUR STUDENTS.

LOOK AT HIM GO.

I'VE NEVER SEEN *NIGHTCRAWLER* MOVE SO FAST.

COLOSSUS IS REALLY TRYING TO NAIL HIM!

CLOSE, *MEIN FREUND*...

...BUT NO CIGAR.

NO FAIR *TELEPORTING!*

YOU KNOW THE RULES, *PIOTR NICHOLIAVITCH.*

IN THE *DANGER ROOM* ...

...*X-MEN* USE *ALL* THEIR ASSETS.

IF YOU INSIST--!

=OW!=

KA-THUNK

KURT, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

NIGHTCRAWLER!

KURT, IT'S BETSY, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

PETER, SOMETHING'S WRONG!

HIS THOUGHTS ARE SCRAMBLED! THERE'S ANOTHER PRESENCE IN HIS MIND.

IT'S BLOODY BESS.

I'M IN TROUBLE!

WILL YOU HELP ME?

?

!

YES.

BAMF

BAMF

BAMF

BAMF

WHOULF!

NEVER DONE A 'PORT LIKE THAT BEFORE.

I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF A *DESERT*...

YOU *BAMFS* MUST HAVE ACTED LIKE LIVING *SUPERCHARGERS.*

...IN THE MIDDLE OF THE *NIGHT.*

HOW FAR HAVE WE GONE?

YOU HEARD MY CALL!

YOU CAME TO HELP!

BESS?

MY HERO!

!

YOUR ARMOR'S IN SHREDS.

WHY AM I HERE, BESS?

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?

"ALWAYS THE MAN OF BUSINESS.

"YOU AND I, WE'RE GONNA HAVETA WORK ON THAT.

"SIMPLY PUT, THE ***CRIMSON PIRATES*** WERE ON A CAPER FOR OUR BOSS, ***TULLAMORE VOGE.***

"HE BEAMED US DOWN TO THE ***WEST CHINA DESERT*** TO COLLECT AN ARTIFACT.

"SCANS TOLD US THE FIGURE WAS TOTALLY ***INERT.*** NOT A SIGN OF LIFE, DEFINITELY NOT OF ***SENTIENCE.***

"***KILLIAN*** FIGURED TO PLAY THINGS SAFE BY HAVING ME ***PSI-SCAN*** THE FIGURE.

"***BIG MISTAKE.***

"NEXT I KNEW, I WAS FIGHTING FOR MY LIFE.

"THE *HOSTILE* WANTED TO POSSESS ME, TOO, BUT IT COULDN'T GRAB A FIRM HOLD OF ME. MY NATURAL PSYCHIC DEFENSES WERE TOO STRONG.

"SO IT WENT FOR THE NEXT BEST THING: IT TRIED TO MAKE ME *DEAD.*

"I TAUGHT HIM THE HARD WAY, I DON'T DIE SO EASY.

"I RAN FOR MY LIFE."

AND YELLED FOR HELP TO THE ONLY PERSON MY HEART TOLD ME WOULD COME WHEN I CALLED, NO QUESTIONS ASKED.

THAT'S CRAZY!

YOU'RE *HERE.*

JUST THE SAME AS I'LL BE BY YOUR SIDE WHENEVER YOU NEED ME.

LIKE IT OR NOT, SWEETIE--THERE'S *SOMETHING* BETWEEN US.

IF YOU DON'T TRUST ME, TRUST YOUR *BAMFS.*

PERHAPS SOME OTHER TIME, THANK YOU.

RIGHT NOW, WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH YOUR MYSTERIOUS ADVERSARY.

'S FUNNY.

SAME THOUGHT, HAD BY *US.*

TIME TO *DIE.*

SEA DOGS!

BEFORE I CAN REACT...

...BESS STRIKES THE FIRST BLOW.

SHE'S FAST AND STRONG--AND, I MUST ADMIT, *GORGEOUS.*

FORTUNATELY, THIS SCOUTING PARTY NUMBERS ONLY *THREE.*

THEY'RE QUICKLY DEALT WITH.

THE DOGS POSSESS A GROUP AWARENESS: WHAT ONE KNOWS, THEY *ALL* DO.

WHICH MEANS THEY KNOW WHERE WE ARE.

TIME TO START RUNNING--

--AND HOPE WE CAN FIND A POSITION TO DEFEND.

OR, BETTER YET, FOR *RESCUE* TO ARRIVE.

THE JEAN GREY SCHOOL.

ZIGGY--

--WHAT'RE YOU DOING?

WORKING, *RICO*, CAN'T'CHA TELL?

WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE--

--AND YOU'RE DEFINITELY NOT SUPPOSED TO BE TAKING APART KURT'S *BLACKBIRD!*

GIMME A BREAK, MY FRIEND. SOME OF THESE SYSTEMS ARE *ANCIENT!*

I'M JUST MAKING THINGS WAY *BETTER.*

PROFESSOR WAGNER'S GONNA KILL US.

WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

SOMEBODY SOUND AN *ALARM?*

ARE THOSE THE *X-MEN?*

I HAVE A MENTAL TRACK ON KURT.

WE SEEM TO BE *PSI-LINKED.*

ANYONE CAPABLE OF PULLING HIM TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD IS NOT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY.

CHANCES ARE, HE NEEDS OUR HELP.

GET THE X-PLANE *AIRBORNE,* HANK.

THAT IS SO COOL!

DOES IT HAPPEN OFTEN?

KINDA, YAH.

THIS LOOKS SERIOUS, ZIGGY. WE SHOULD GET BACK UPSTAIRS.

YEAH, YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT. LEMME CLEAN UP-- YIKES!?!

THESE ARE NIGHTCRAWLER'S LITTLE BAMF BUDDIES!

THOSE ARE THE FLIGHT CONTROLS.

DO THEY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING?

I DUNNO...

...BUT THEY STARTED THE ENGINES!

C'MON, ZIGGY, WE GOTTA--

BAMF

WE'VE BEEN RUNNING A LONG TIME...

...BOTH OF US MORE ON WILL THAN MUSCLE.

WE'RE BEYOND EXHAUSTION-- YET WE REFUSE TO QUIT.

YOU HAVE A GOOD GRIP, WAGNER.

AS DO YOU, BESS.

TAKES A *PIRATE* TO KNOW A PIRATE.

STOP TALKING LIKE THAT, WOMAN.

KILL!

KILL!

WE HAVE BIGGER PROBLEMS RIGHT NOW.

KILL!

KILL!

AND THIS TIME, THEY'RE NOT ALONE.

YOU CANNOT ESCAPE, MONSTER. NOR CAN YOU SAVE THE WOMAN.

YOU ARE BOTH FOOLS TO EVEN TRY.

I'VE HEARD THAT VOCAL CADENCE BEFORE.

AND SEEN THAT *SMILE* AS WELL.

KILLIAN IS POSSESSED BY SOMEONE I KNOW--BUT *WHO?*

YOU MAY BE IMMUNE TO MY INFLUENCE, BESS...

...BUT THAT PROBLEM IS EASILY DEALT WITH.

HIS *ARMOR* PROTECTS KILLIAN'S BODY AGAINST MY SWORDS.

BUT NOT HIS *HEAD!*

KRAK

YOUR LIFE IS DONE, BLOODY BESS.

WANNA BET?

YOUR PROBLEM, PSI-THIEF, IS THAT YOU STOLE *BROADSIDE'S* BODY, BUT NOT HIS SMARTS.

PIRATE RULES: SHOOT FIRST, BOAST LATER.

OTHERWISE...

CURSE YOU, HARLOT, I CAN'T SEE!

THAT'S THE *LEAST* OF YOUR PROBLEMS.

C'MON, *BAMFS*, LET'S TAKE 'IM *DOWN!*

GOOD AS WE ARE, HARD AS WE FIGHT, OUR ADVERSARIES KEEP ON COMING.

THE CREATURE POSSESSING THEM SIMPLY WON'T LET THEM FALL.

THAT RUTHLESSNESS IS YET ANOTHER CLUE.

BUT IF I'M RIGHT ABOUT WHO HE IS...

...THEN WE'RE IN REAL TROUBLE.

SORRY, ELF. BULLETS WON'T SHOOT THROUGH THEIR ARMOR. I'M NOT EVEN SLOWING 'EM DOWN.

AND I'M RUNNING LOW ON AMMO!

THEN WE'LL HAVE TO PULL BACK--*BESS, BEHIND YOU!*

I'VE TAKEN YOUR MEASURE, PSI-WITCH--

AAAHHHH--!

BESS!

--AND I HAVE FOUND YOU *WANTING!*

NO!

I WILL NOT SEE ANOTHER FRIEND *DIE!*

CRIMSON PIRATES! STAND DOWN!

YOU'RE TOO LATE, X-MEN.

YOUR DEFENSES ARE BREACHED!

THOSE WHO MIGHT HAVE RESISTED ME ARE THE FIRST TO FALL.

BEFORE IT'S EVEN BEGUN...

...YOUR BATTLE IS LOST.

SAVING ME'S GETTING TO BE A HABIT.

MORE LIKE A DANGEROUS PLEASURE.

YOU'VE TAKEN SOME HARD HITS.

I'LL RECOVER, SWEETIE.

WE NEED TO GET YOU TO SAFETY--*MEIN GOTT!*

WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT. ILLUMINATED BY THE SUNRISE.

THE CHINESE BUILT A *CITY* IN WHAT MUST HAVE BEEN AN *OASIS.*

IT LOOKS BRAND-NEW--AND ALSO PRETTY MUCH *DESERTED.*

AT THE VERY LEAST, THERE'LL BE PLENTY OF PLACES TO HIDE.

STAY SAFE, LEAVE THE REST TO *ME.*

THAT WAS *NICE.*

IT WAS AN IMPULSE.

I LIKE IT.

I--LIKE *YOU.*

DIDN'T SEE THAT COMING.

YOU AND ME *BOTH.*

LET'S HOPE WE'RE BOTH AROUND TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

OH, LOOK-- THE HERO, ACTING LIKE A *HERO.*

BRAVE-- AND SUPREMELY FOOLISH-- RIGHT TO THE *END!*

I'LL SIMPLY SEIZE YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS AS I DID THEIRS--AND TURN YOU INTO MY *SLAVE!*

I DON'T THINK SO.

I HAVE WALKED PATHS THROUGH REALMS BEYOND IMAGINATION.

I HAVE STOOD ILLUMINATED BY THE *LIGHT* THAT SPARKED *CREATION.*

IT WILL TAKE FAR *MORE* THAN YOUR DARKNESS TO FRIGHTEN ME--

--SHADOW KING!

YOU DARE DEFY ME!

WITH MY EVERY BREATH--

--TO THE LAST ONE, AND BEYOND!

DEAR LORD, IF I AM TRULY HERE FOR A PURPOSE, LET ME BE TRUE TO MY FAITH--

--AND THE TRUST YOU PLACE IN ME.

SUCH SWEET WORDS. D'YOU THINK THEY MATTER?

D'YOU THINK THEY'LL SAVE YOU?

I HAVE BEEN TWISTING THE SOULS OF YOUR KIND SINCE BEFORE THE DAWN OF HISTORY.

THERE ARE NONE I COULD NOT EVENTUALLY CORRUPT--

--AND DESTROY.

OF ALL MY PREY, HEROES ARE THE BEST.

THEY FIGHT SO HARD.

NO-- NOT YOU!

I WILL NOT LET YOU TAKE MY SOUL.

THEY FALL SO FAR.

FOOLISH STORM, I DON'T NEED YOUR SOUL.

NOT YET.

I HAVE YOUR BODY.

FOR THE MOMENT, THAT WILL SUFFICE.

TELL ME, NIGHTCRAWLER, DO YOU LIKE MY NEW *TOYS?*

WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE?*

SIMPLY STARTED THE PROCESS--OF REMAKING YOUR FELLOW X-MEN IN MY OWN IMAGE.

FOR NOW, THEY JUST HAVE MY SMILE.

BUT WITH EVERY OBSCENITY, EVERY CRUELTY, MY INFLUENCE WILL SPREAD, UNTIL, IN A SURPRISINGLY SHORT TIME...

...YOUR DEAR FRIENDS, YOUR PRECIOUS "HEROES" WILL BE JUST LIKE ME!

THEIR FIRST STEP ON THE PATH TO THAT DAMNATION...

...WILL BE YOUR EXECUTION!

IS THIS WHY YOU CAME TO RESCUE ME, MY FRIENDS?

IF SO, I WILL NOT LET YOU DOWN.

I WILL FIND A WAY TO DETHRONE THIS SO-CALLED "*KING.*"

I WILL FIND A WAY TO *SAVE* YOU!

NEXT: NIGHTCRAWLER VS. THE X-MEN!

NEXT ISSUE

NIGHTCRAWLER #4 COVER BY TODD NAUCK AND RACHELLE ROSENBERG

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X-MEN TITLES ON SALE!

- ☐ **ALL-NEW X-MEN #34**
  The All-New X-Men are trapped in the Ultimate Universe. Time-displaced wasn't enough, we have to add space?
- ☐ **ALL-NEW X-FACTOR #16**
  Hopefully X-Factor will be safe at Serval Headquarters…wait, is that a welcoming committee of Sentinels?!
- ☐ **AMAZING X-MEN #13**
  Anole knows all too well that some don't get the option of hiding who they are. But coming to terms with it is another story.
- ☐ **CYCLOPS #7**
  Scott Summers is aboard a new space pirate ship, with a cutthroat captain, and a crew of criminals…fun...but the Captain's daughter is kinda cute, right?
- ☐ **DEADPOOL #37**
  Deadpool has given up violence in favor of enlightenment! How that will protect his FauX-Men friends from the real X-Men, I don't know.
- ☐ **DEADPOOL'S ART OF WAR #2**
  Deadpool's war is well under way...and somehow he ended up in Loki's dungeon! Fortunately, DP knows the secrets of war, right? RIGHT?!
- ☐ **DEATH OF WOLVERINE: LIFE AFTER LOGAN #1**
  Logan's death hasn't been easy for those who knew him best. But what do you do when you've got a runt-sized hole in your heart?
- ☐ **DEATH OF WOLVERINE: THE LOGAN LEGACY #4 & #5**
  Lady Deathstrike searches for an item once belonging to Logan. Daken may not want to take on his father's legacy, but as his son he may not have a choice.
- ☐ **DEATH OF WOLVERINE: THE WEAPON X PROGRAM #1 & #2**
  The escaped subjects of the revamped Weapon X program flee increasingly deadly attempts to bring them back under control.
- ☐ **NIGHTCRAWLER #8**
  Still reeling from his friend's death, Nightcrawler must cope with his pain while the shadow of an old enemy looms large.
- ☐ **MAGNETO #12**
  As the Red Skull's influence permeates the world, Magneto is confronted by the best friend he thought buried…
- ☐ **STORM #5**
  Storm is grieving the loss of her friend, Wolverine. But with the help of Yukio, Storm may find solace in taking care of Wolverine's unfinished business.
- ☐ **UNCANNY X-MEN #28**
  We all need a father figure to kick us back in line every so often. Scott Summers killed his, unfortunately, so he's going to need a new one. Enter…MAGNETO!
- ☐ **WOLVERINE & THE X-MEN #12**
  Quentin Quire returns to the Jean Grey School! But who is this mild-mannered, thoughtful young man in the white suit?
- ☐ **X-FORCE #12**
  Fantomex is the best there is at everything. At least, he will be once we're all dead.
- ☐ **X-MEN #21**
  What are the origins of this deep space threat? But is a larger conspiracy at work that may have its roots close to home?

NIGHTCRAWLER®

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CLAREMONT
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ROSENBERG

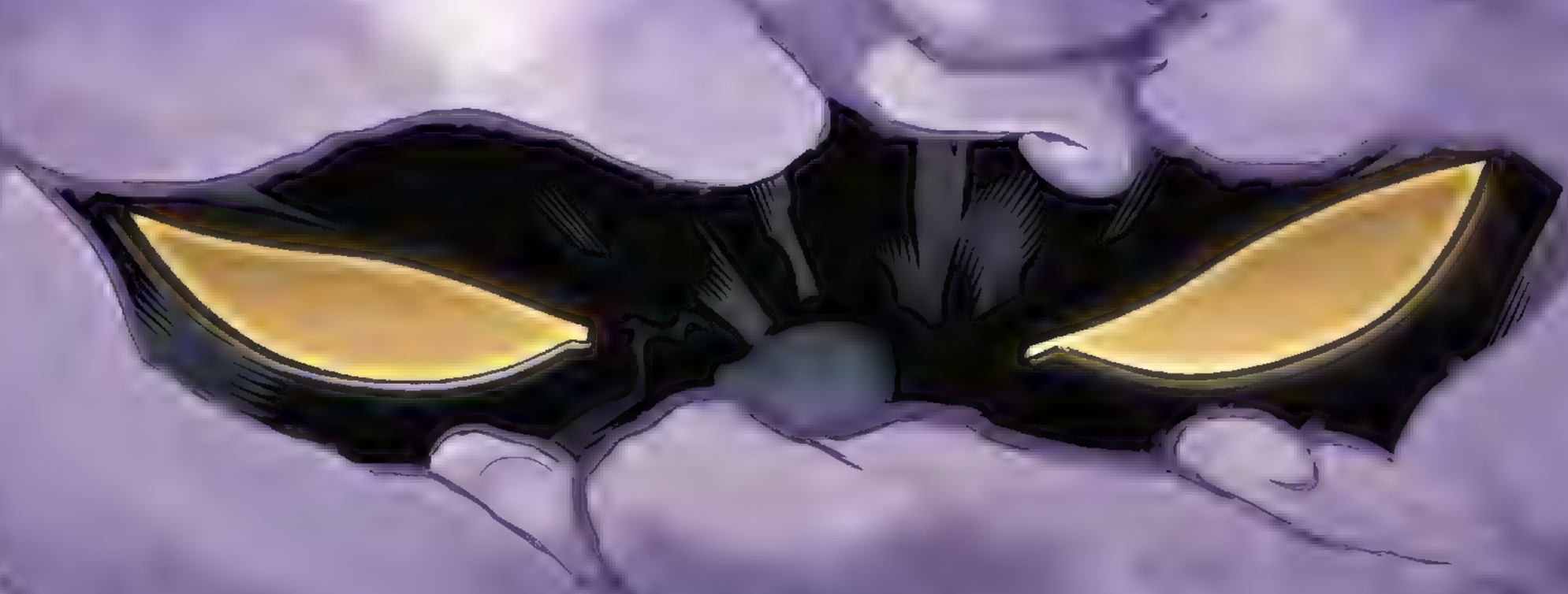
009

RECENTLY RETURNED FROM THE AFTERLIFE, NIGHTCRAWLER HAS BEEN SEARCHING FOR HIS PLACE IN A WORLD FAR DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE HE LEFT BEHIND.

PREVIOUSLY IN...

NIGHTCRAWLER

DURING A DANGER ROOM TRAINING SESSION AT THE JEAN GREY SCHOOL, NIGHTCRAWLER RECEIVED A TELEPATHIC DISTRESS CALL FROM BLOODY BESS OF THE CRIMSON PIRATES. TELEPORTED TO A DESERT IN CHINA, KURT AIDED BESS IN EVADING HER MIND-CONTROLLED TEAMMATES. BUT THINGS WENT FROM BAD TO WORSE WHEN THE X-MEN ARRIVED ON THE SCENE AND THEY TOO FELL UNDER THE PSYCHIC SWAY OF THE SHADOW KING!



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BACK IN THE DAY...

WHEN THIS WAS STILL OFFICIALLY *PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS...*

...LIFE FOR THE *X-MEN* SEEMED SO MUCH... *SIMPLER.*

HUMANITY THOUGHT OF US AS *OUTLAWS...*

...BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP US FIGHTING AS *HEROES*, DOING OUR BEST TO SAVE THE WORLD, AND OCCASIONALLY THE MULTIVERSE.

DANGER ROOM'S ALL SET, GUYS.

I'VE NEVER KNOWN A TIME WHEN I WAS MORE *HAPPY.* BECAUSE WE WEREN'T JUST TEAMMATES, WE WERE *FAMILY.*

YOUNGEST AMONG US WAS *KITTY PRYDE*, AS BRAVE AS SHE WAS BRILLIANT.

TRAINING SEQUENCE IS READY TO START, LOGAN.

PRESS THE BUTTON, KID.

LET'S GET TO WORK!

LOGAN WAS MY BEST FRIEND.

IN MANY WAYS HE WAS THE *BEDROCK* THAT SUPPORTED US ALL.

THAT DAY, WITH ME, HE TOOK ON THE ROLE OF *TEACHER.*

YOU GO, NIGHTCRAWLER!

I HAVE FAITH--YOU CAN BEAT THESE GUYS!

YOU CAN TRY, ANYWAY.

I APPRECIATE THE CONFIDENCE, WOLVERINE!

THERE WASN'T MUCH CONFIDENCE IN MY VOICE.

I KNEW WHAT THIS TEAM COULD DO.

I FIGURED I DIDN'T HAVE A PRAYER.

BUT STILL, I HAD TO *TRY.*

BEAST HAD THE EDGE IN RAW STRENGTH--I HAD THE EDGE IN AGILITY.

I'VE KNOCKED HIM *OFF-BALANCE!*

UNFORTUNATELY, BEFORE I COULD PRESS MY ADVANTAGE...

...*ICEMAN* CAME TO HIS RESCUE.

RIDE MY *MUTANT BOBSLED RUN,* HANK.

I'LL PUT YOU RIGHT BACK IN THE GAME.

MUCH OBLIGED, *BOBBY.*

WHATTA MOVE--

YOU'RE GONNA HAVETA UP YOUR GAME BIG-TIME, ELF!

TELL ME SOMETHING I *DON'T* KNOW, *KATZCHEN!*

TRYING TO TAKE ME BY *SURPRISE,* KURT?

ORORO LED THE TEAM, THEN AND NOW.

SHE IS CALLED *STORM...*

...BECAUSE SHE CONTROLS THE *WEATHER.*

GUESS AGAIN.

NOT SIMPLY *LIGHTNING...*

ALL YOURS, *PIOTR.*

*...*BUT ALSO *WINDS.*

SPACIBA, STORM.

COLOSSUS MIGHT LITERALLY BE A MAN MADE OF *STEEL...*

;OW!;

*...*BUT HE ALSO MOVES VERY *FAST.*

WORSE, HE HAMMERED ME RIGHT INTO THE ARMS OF OUR NEWEST MEMBER, *ROGUE.*

GOTCHA, SUGAH!

OKAY--LET'S CALL THIS A WRAP!

COULD'A GONE BETTER, BUB.

I KNOW.

NEVER DO WHAT'S EXPECTED.

THINK FASTER, KURT--AND *NASTIER.*

BAMF.

ALWAYS LOOK FOR WAYS TO TURN YOUR ADVERSARY'S ASSETS INTO *LIABILITIES.*

OUTSIDE THE DANGER ROOM, YOU WON'T GET A SECOND CHANCE. YOU SCREW UP THERE...

*...*YOU PAY THE *ULTIMATE* PRICE.

NOW, I FACE MY FRIENDS FOR *REAL.*

POSSESSED BY THE *SHADOW KING*, THEY MEAN TO *KILL* ME...

...AND THE WOMAN I PROTECT, *BLOODY BESS.*

SHADOW-X!

FIRST MOVE--TAKE OUT THE TEAM LEADER, *STORM.*

MUTANT *FOOL*, YOU FACE TWO *TELEPATHS!*

WE CAN READ YOUR *EVERY THOUGHT!*

BAMF

I'M COUNTING ON THAT.

I HOPE *RACHEL* FORGIVES ME FOR THIS.

YOU "HEARD" WHAT I *WANTED* YOU TO HEAR.

AND *BETSY* AS WELL.

'PORT HER AWAY, *BAMFS!*

BAMF

BAMF

BAMF

THE SHADOW KING IS RIGHT, THE TELEPATHS *ARE* THE PARAMOUNT THREAT.

YOU THINK THIS WILL HURT ME, *FOOL?*

NOT YOU. *HER.*

NOW, MONSTER, YOU HAVE *NO* TELEPATHS. OUR FOOTING IS MORE *EQUAL.*

BAMF

SLAM

MY NEXT TARGET IS *STORM.*

TRUE, THE SHADOW KING CONTROLS ORORO'S MIND...

...BUT I KNOW SOMETHING HE DOES NOT:

MY FRIEND IS A *PROUD* WOMAN, WITH A FEROCIOUS *TEMPER.*

SLAP SLAP

SLAPSLAP SLAP

HOW *DARE* YOU!

BAMF

LOCAL WEATHER REFLECTS THE WIND RIDER'S EMOTIONS-- RAGE GIVES BIRTH TO *TORNADOS.*

THAT HOPEFULLY IS JUST THE BEGINNING.

IF I CAN MAKE ORORO ANGRY ENOUGH, HER PASSION MAY SHATTER THE SHADOW KING'S CHAINS.

EVERYTHING'S HAPPENING TOO *FAST!*

NIGHTCRAWLER IS PROVING MORE TROUBLE THAN I ANTICIPATED.

BUT THIS REALLY CHANGES NOTHING.

THESE ARE HIS *FRIENDS.*

HE DOESN'T WANT TO HURT THEM; HE WANTS TO *SAVE* THEM.

"THAT IS HIS WEAKNESS."

AS LOGAN WOULD SAY, "WANNA BET?"

I'VE PLAYED THIS KIND OF GAME BEFORE, DEMON--WITH A TEACHER *FAR* MORE FRIGHTENING THAN YOU.

BAD GUYS *LOVE* POSSESSING HEROES, DEAL WITH IT.

DON'T BE FAZED BY SIZE OR POWER--HOW YOU HIT, *WHERE* YOU HIT, IS WHAT MATTERS.

AGAINST 'EM, USE YOUR *SKILLS.*

"USE *ALL* YOUR ASSETS."

YOU WERE A GREAT TEACHER, MY FRIEND.

TODAY, I'LL PUT THOSE LESSONS TO GOOD USE.

UGH K!

HERE COMES 'RO!

SERIOUSLY OUT FOR MY BLOOD!

I'LL HAVE TO TIME MY NEXT MOVE JUST RIGHT.

HANK'S UNCONSCIOUS, SO THE SHADOW KING CAN'T SEE THROUGH HIS EYES.

THE STORM HIDES ME FROM ORORO.

THAT'S MY CUE.

THE TORNADO GATHERS UP BEAST...

BAMF

...AND SPITS HIM OUT.

SLAMMO

PERFECT!

MEANWHILE--

IN THE HEART OF THE DERELICT, ABANDONED CITY BELOW THE TOWERING *DUNES*...

FOOLS!

D'YOU THINK SEPARATING ME FROM THE OTHERS WILL MAKE THE SLIGHTEST DIFFERENCE?

MY HOLD ON YOUR TELEPATH *PSYLOCKE* IS UNBREAKABLE!

WE'LL SEE.

YOU SHOULD HAVE KEPT RUNNING, *BESS*.

THAT MISTAKE WILL COST YOU YOUR *LIFE*.

THREATS ARE EASY, MATE.

COME AT ME, THEN. TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT.

WITH PLEASURE!

MISSED!

MISSED AGAIN!

POOR DEAR, YOU'LL HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN *THAT!*

ALLOW ME TO DEMONSTRATE.

OH LOOK, YOUR LITTLE FRIENDS ARE TRYING TO COME TO YOUR RESCUE!

HOW SWEET.

THIS IS A PRIVATE FIGHT, MUNCHKINS.

AND NOW, SINCE YOU CLEARLY CAN'T BEAT ME...

... WHY DON'T YOU JOIN ME INSTEAD?

YOUR BAMFS ARE MINE, BESS. AND SOON, YOU'LL JOIN THEM!

WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT...

ONCE MORE, BACK IN THE DAY...

PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS, KATZCHEN?

WATCHING YOU AND LOGAN--

--REMINDED ME OF WHAT HAPPENED IN JAPAN.

'S FUNNY, AS HEROES WE GET SO USED TO WINNING AGAINST IMPOSSIBLE ODDS.

WE FORGET WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DON'T.

FIRST TIME I FACED HIS OLD TEACHER, OGUN, I LOST.

OGUN REMADE ME IN HIS IMAGE. HE TURNED ME INTO A WEAPON.

AND SENT ME OUT TO KILL LOGAN.

BUT YOU DIDN'T.

NOPE-- I WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH, NOT THEN.

WHAT ABOUT THE NEXT TIME?

LOGAN MADE ME BETTER-- SAME AS HE'S DOING WITH YOU. SOMEDAY, THAT MIGHT COST HIM.

WE WIN THE BATTLES, KURT--WE SAVE THE WORLD, WE'VE EVEN SAVED THE UNIVERSE--

--BUT WE PAY A PRICE, INSIDE.

TRUE, THIS ISN'T THE FUTURE WE DREAMED OF--

--BUT POWER COMES WITH RESPONSIBILITY.

I SUPPOSE IT ALL COMES DOWN TO FAITH.

WHAT WE DO, WHAT WE SACRIFICE, I PRAY MAKES THE FUTURE BETTER.

ISN'T THAT WHY WE'RE X-MEN?

I PRAY YOU'RE RIGHT--

--SAME AS I PRAY WE'RE ALL HERE TO ENJOY IT.

SO MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE THAT DAY...

...YET I STILL HOLD FAST TO MY PRAYER.

NO MORE TIME FOR MEMORIES NOW--BECAUSE IT LOOKS LIKE I'VE MADE STORM *TRULY* ANGRY.

NIGHTCRAWLER, MY LIGHTNING WILL BURN YOU TO *ASHES!*

AND MY WINDS WILL BLOW THAT DUST TO *OBLIVION!*

TALK IS CHEAP, WIND-RIDER.

TAP TAP TAP

EH?!E

PUT UP--

--OR *SHUT UP!*

SLAP SLAP SLAP SLAP SLAP

YEARGH!

THAT, I THINK, SHOULD DO THE TRICK.

BOBBY'S STILL ON HIS FEET.

HE'S TOUGHER THAN EXPECTED.

CAN'T LET *ICEMAN* TOUCH ME.

YOUR STICKS CANNOT HURT ME.

ONCE I *FREEZE* YOU SOLID...

GOOD, SHADOW KING'S TOTALLY FOCUSED ON BOBBY.

IF I'M RIGHT, ORORO'S *EMOTIONS* ARE RUNNING THE SHOW WITH HER.

...I'LL USE THEM TO *SHATTER* YOUR BODY TO BITS!

THE *STORM* SHE'S UNLEASHING SHOULD CATCH BOBBY TOTALLY BY *SURPRISE!*

WHAT?!?

A CUNNING MOVE, X-MAN...

...BUT SUCH PLOYS ARE WASTED ON *COLOSSUS!*

I MAY HAVE LOST TOTAL CONTROL OF STORM--FOR NOW--BUT HER WINDS CANNOT HARM ME.

ANY MORE THAN YOUR *PUNY* STICKS!

TELEPORT ALL YOU LIKE, YOU ARE BUT *MORTAL.*

EVENTUALLY YOU WILL TIRE--AND WEAKEN--AND MAKE A *MISTAKE.*

THEN, NIGHTCRAWLER, YOU'RE *MINE!*

PERHAPS SO--EXCEPT THAT PIOTR STANDS ATOP A MOUNTAIN OF *SAND.*

AND WHAT DOES *WIND* DO TO SAND?

THE GROUND BENEATH MY FEET--

--IT'S *BLOWING AWAY!*

GRAVITY DOES THE REST.

IT'S A LONG WAY DOWN.

ORORO'S WINDS AND PIOTR'S MASSIVE FORM TEAR A HUGE RIFT IN THE MOUNTAIN.

COLOSSUS CAN'T GET HIS BALANCE.

EVERY TIME HE TRIES, THE AVALANCHE OF SAND KNOCKS HIM OFF HIS FEET.

EVENTUALLY, HE'LL HIT BOTTOM.

THAT'S WHEN HE'LL GET *BURIED.*

BY THE TIME HE FREES HIMSELF, THE BATTLE WILL BE *OVER.*

HOPEFULLY, WITH A *HAPPY* ENDING.

NOW COMES THE *HARD* PART.

YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS, WAGNER!

EMBRACE YOUR WINDS, ORORO!

LET THEM WASH THE CONTAGION FROM YOUR SOUL!

YOU ARE NO ONE'S *SLAVE!*

YOU ARE A *GODDESS!*

YOUR WORDS ARE WASTED, FOOL!

THE WIND-WITCH IS *MINE!*

HIS WORDS ARE *NOTHING!*

HIS DOMAIN IS *SHADOW!*

YOU COMMAND *LIGHTNING!*

BANISH HIM WITH ITS *FIRE!*

IT IS *YOU* WHO ARE...

...MY *FRIEND?*

ORORO?

WHAT AM I DOING?

WHAT HAVE I DONE?

JUST BEEN HAVING A ROUGH DAY, IS ALL.

FORGIVE ME, MY FRIEND, I...

...I...

...I...

SHE'S *UNCONSCIOUS.*

REST, WIND-RIDER.

FROM HERE ON, I WILL KEEP YOU SAFE.

YOU HAVE WON *NOTHING!*

I WILL CLAIM HER *AGAIN.*

SHE WILL BE MY SLAVE *FOREVER!*

THOSE ARE BUT *WORDS.*

I HAVE FACED *ALL* YOUR X-MEN, AS I FACED THE *CRIMSON PIRATES* BEFORE THEM.

AND I'M STILL STANDING.

LET'S SEE HOW *YOU* FARE, SHADOW KING.

WHAT?!

MY BAMFS--

--THEY'RE ATTACKING ME!

THEY'RE SMILING LIKE THE SHADOW KING'S *VICTIMS*...

... AND ATTACKING ME FOR *REAL!*

NO MATTER WHAT I DO--

BAMF

BAMF

--I CAN'T SHAKE THEM!

WHERE IS YOUR *BRAVADO* NOW, X-MAN?

YOUR CAUSE IS *LOST.*

AND SOON, SO TOO SHALL BE YOUR *LIFE.*

TIME TO *DIE*, NIGHTCRAWLER!

ONLY THIS TIME, YOU *WON'T* BE COMING BACK!

NEXT: THE BEST-LAID PLANS...!

NIGHTCRAWLER®

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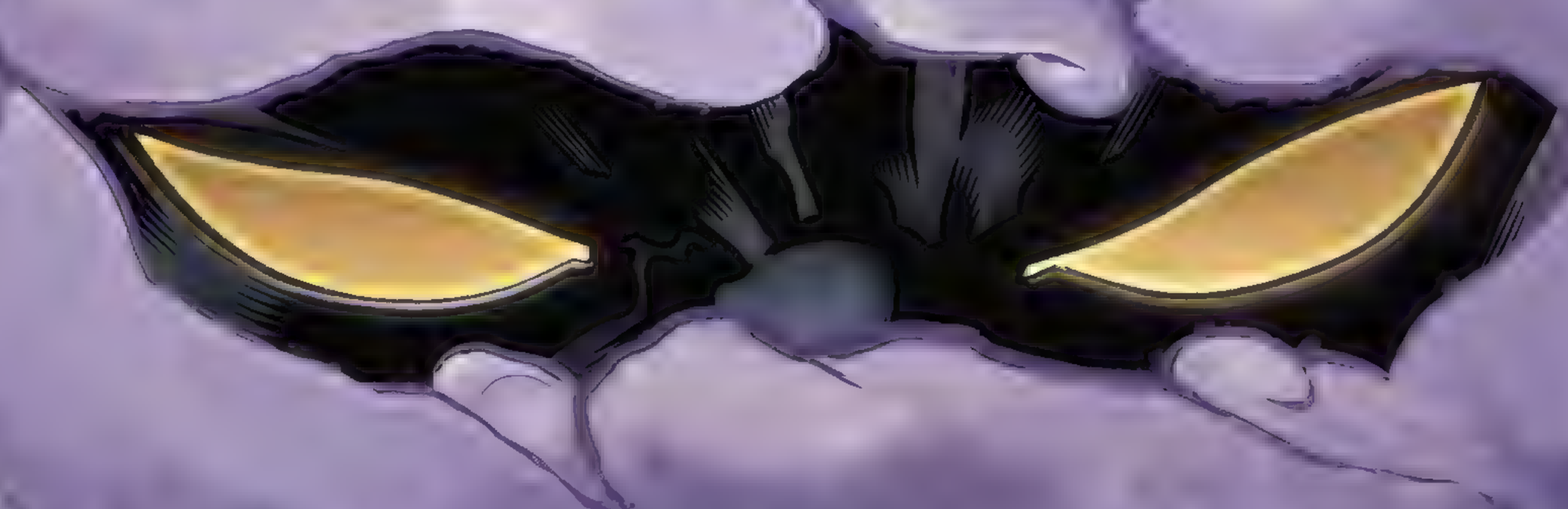
010

RECENTLY RETURNED FROM THE AFTERLIFE, NIGHTCRAWLER HAS BEEN SEARCHING FOR HIS PLACE IN A WORLD FAR DIFFERENT THE ONE HE LEFT BEHIND.

PREVIOUSLY IN...

NIGHTCRAWLER

AFTER RECEIVING A DISTRESS CALL FROM BLOODY BESS OF THE CRIMSON PIRATES, NIGHTCRAWLER WAS TELEPORTED TO A SECLUDED DESERT IN CHINA, WHERE HE IMMEDIATELY CAME UNDER ATTACK BY THE PIRATES AND THE MIND-CONTROLLING MASTERMIND PULLING THEIR STRINGS: THE SHADOW KING! AND THINGS WENT FROM BAD TO WORSE WHEN THE X-MEN ARRIVED ON THE SCENE TO HELP, BUT INSTEAD ALSO FELL UNDER THE SHADOW KING'S SWAY. MANAGING TO INCAPACITATE ALL OF HIS TEAMMATES–SAVE PSYLOCKE–VICTORY SEEMED TO BE WITHIN NIGHTCRAWLER'S GRASP...BUT IT WAS SNATCHED AWAY AS HIS ONLY REMAINING ALLIES, THE BAMFS, TURNED ON HIM AS WELL!



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NEAR THE SHANSHAN DEPRESSION OF SOUTHWEST CHINA...

WHAT'S THE BLACKBIRD DOING HERE?

IS IT CARRYING OTHER X-MEN?

WHOEVER'S ABOARD THAT AIRCRAFT, NIGHTCRAWLER--

--THEY CANNOT SAVE YOU...

THE BEST LAID PLANS--!

ANY MORE THAN YOU COULD SAVE--

BESS!

I THOUGHT BLOODY BESS AND THE BAMFS WOULD HAVE A DECENT CHANCE AGAINST PSYLOCKE.

WAS I WRONG?

WATCH ME, FOOL--

--AS I BREAK YOUR WOULD-BE RESCUERS TO MY WILL.

RICO, NIGHTCRAWLER'S IN TROUBLE.

WE HAVE TO HELP!

WHAT CAN WE DO, ZIGGY?

THEY ALREADY BEAT THE X-MEN!

IN TRUTH, THE DEMON DEFEATED HIS FRIENDS...

...AFTER I HAD MADE THEM MY SLAVES.

GASP!

PERHAPS, AFTER I CLAIM *YOUR* SOULS...

...I WILL HAVE YOU *SLAY* YOUR TEACHER.

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DO *ANYTHING!*

WE'RE GOING TO FIND A WAY TO *STOP* YOU!

RICO-- *DON'T!*

OH, REALLY?

ARGH!

I AM THE *SHADOW KING!*

YOU ARE NO MATCH FOR ME!

HEY! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE ON *OUR* SIDE!

THEY ARE MY CREATURES NOW.

AS YOU SOON WILL BE.

NO WAY!

I EXIST IN THE REALM OF SPIRIT, NOT OF FLESH. YOUR GUN CANNOT HARM ME, GIRL.

=YIKES!=

HE'S INSIDE MY HEAD!

BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T HARM YOU!

YOUR RESISTANCE MEANS NOTHING.

GOTTA KEEP FIGHTING!

JUST NEED-- A FEW MORE SECONDS--

I WILL SMOTHER THE LIGHT WITHIN YOUR MIND-- EH?!

--TO REALIGN MY BLASTER!

=YEAGH!=

SURPRISE!

AHHH--!

I HEAR A SCREAM--

--BUT THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.

RIGHT NOW, I HAVE PROBLEMS OF MY *OWN.*

POOR LITTLE ELF--STILL TOO WEAK TO *TELEPORT?*

EVEN IF YOU HAD *ALL* YOUR POWERS, WRETCH...

...YOU'D BE NO MATCH FOR ME.

BETSY!

LOGAN WAS RIGHT: SOMETIMES YOU ARE ***SUCH*** AN EASY MARK.

TOLDJA WE COULD ***FOOL*** HIM.

THE ***SEA-DOGS*** ARE ALL YOURS, ELF.

MY PLEASURE, LADIES.

LEAVE THE *BIG GUYS* TO US.

WE'RE SYMPATICO PSYCHICS, ELF. ONCE PSYLOCKE GOT INSIDE MY HEAD, I STOLE HER AWAY FROM THE SHADOW KING'S CONTROL.

NOW WE'LL DO THE SAME FOR MY PALS.

PSYLOCKE, YOU TAKE CARE OF *KILLIAN*--

MY PLEASURE.

--BROADSIDE IS *MINE!*

AND DON'T FORGET, OUR EDGE WON'T LAST FOREVER.

RIGHT NOW THE SHADOW KING IS FOCUSED ON THE PLANE.

ONCE HE REALIZES WHAT WE'RE DOING...

...WE LOSE THAT EDGE.

AND WITH IT, THE *FIGHT!*

SOLUTION--WE CLOBBER THEM BEFORE THAT HAPPENS.

BOOT

SLAMMO

CERTAINLY SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN.

WONDER HOW *NIGHTCRAWLER'S* DOING?

THE SHADOW KING REQUIRES A *HOST.*

HE WOULDN'T TAKE KILLIAN OR BROADSIDE; THEIR WILLS ARE TOO STRONG.

POSSESSING BETSY WAS A *MISTAKE*--AND HE *FAILED* TO SEIZE CONTROL OF BESS--THEIR *PSI-POWERS* PROTECT THEM.

THAT LEAVES ONE OF THESE *SEA-DOGS.*

I'LL HAVE TO EXAMINE EACH OF THEM IN TURN...

...UNTIL I FIND THE *RIGHT ONE.*

THANK HEAVEN THESE *BAMFS* ARE BACK ON MY SIDE.

I CAN TURN EACH ADVERSARY OVER TO THEM.

BUT I'VE NO TIME TO WASTE.

BINGO!

SHOK

TOP MARKS, NIGHTCRAWLER-- NOW THE FIGHT STARTS FOR REAL.

I KNOW-- WE HAVE TO CONFRONT THE SHADOW KING DIRECTLY...

...BEFORE HE CAN POSSESS A NEW HOST.

NOT *US*, SWEETIE-- *YOU.*

CAN'T YOU STOP HIM WITH YOUR *PSYCHIC* POWERS?

WON'T WORK, KURT. HE'S TOO STRONG.

I'M AFRAID THIS HAS TO BE *YOUR* FIGHT.

HE CAN'T CONTROL YOUR MIND; YOU'RE SOMEHOW *IMMUNE.*

BUT WITH *OUR* HELP, YOU CAN FIGHT HIM ON THE ASTRAL PLANE, YOUR WILL AGAINST HIS.

BESS, HE CLAIMS TO BE AS OLD AS *TIME ITSELF.*

HE DEFEATED THE X-MEN IN A HEARTBEAT.

HE CAUGHT 'EM BY SURPRISE.

AND YOU, SWEETIE, FOUGHT YOUR WAY BACK FROM *HEAVEN.*

OUR MONEY'S ON *YOU.*

YOU REALIZE WE'RE ALL THREE OF US *CRAZY.*

LET'S DO THIS!

I'LL *PSI-LINK* THE THREE OF US AND CHANNEL ALL OUR PSYCHIC-STRENGTH INTO YOU.

BEAUTIFUL!

IS THIS THE WORLD AS **TELEPATHS** *SEE IT?*

I'VE NEVER BEHELD SUCH **BEAUTY!**

SAVE THE COMMENTARY, ELF.

TIME TO GO TO **WORK!**

WHAT?!

RICO--
ZIGGY--WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE?!

THREATENING CHILDREN, MONSTER?

NOT WHILE I'M ALIVE TO STOP YOU!

A PROBLEM EASILY DEALT WITH, MUTANT!

YOUR TELEPATHS MAY HAVE GIVEN YOU THE ABILITY TO FACE ME ON THE ASTRAL PLANE--

--BUT YOUR POWER, YOUR STRENGTH, WILL NEVER BE THE EQUAL OF MINE.

I WILL CRUSH YOU ALL!

DID YOU MAKE THOSE SAME BOASTS TO CHARLES XAVIER--

--BEFORE HE ROUTED YOU, BACK IN THE DAY?

THAT WAS A FLUKE!

THE LIKE WILL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN!

WANNA BET?

PROFESSOR WAGNER'S FIGHTING THE MONSTER--

--THIS IS SO COOL!

ONLY IF HE WINS, ZIGGY.

BUT THE ODDS LOOK IMPOSSIBLE.

THE SHADOW KING HAS NO IDEA HOW TO COPE WITH MY SPEED AND AGILITY-- BUT THE ADVANTAGE WILL ONLY LAST FOR A MOMENT.

I HAVE TO FINISH THIS BEFORE HE REGAINS HIS BALANCE.

ALL OR NOTHING-- HERE GOES!

≡YEAGKGH!≡

THIS PSI-SWORD FOCUSES EVERY SCRAP OF POWER FROM BESS AND BETSY, PLUS THE TOTALITY OF MY WILL.

MY HERO!

PSYLOCKE AND I KNEW YOU COULD DO THIS, SWEETIE!

ALL I DID WAS **STUN** HIM, BESS.

THE BATTLE'S NOT OVER YET.

THAT'S WHY I'M **HERE.**

BETSY'S LOOKING AFTER OUR **BODIES.**

BEFORE THE SHADOW KING RECOVERS, WE HAVE TO RETURN HIM TO HIS **PRISON.**

FOLLOW ME, KURT. I'LL LEAD YOU BACK...

...TO WHERE THIS ALL BEGAN.

CAN YOU REINTEGRATE HIM INTO **OMEGA BLACK?**

I SET HIM FREE.

I'M THE **ONLY** ONE WHO CAN.

FOOLISH COW, YOU ARE NO MATCH FOR ME!

KURT, HE'S FIGHTING BACK! I **CAN'T--!**

RELAX, BESS. LET ME **HELP.**

WHERE'D YOU GET SUCH **STRENGTH?**

NO!

WE FIGHT AS A **TEAM,** MONSTER.

TOGETHER, WE CLAIM **VICTORY.**

WE-- **GOT** HIM!

LEAVE OMEGA BLACK WITH THE **X-MEN.**

WE'LL MAKE SURE THE SHADOW KING **NEVER** ESCAPES AGAIN.

"WHAT ABOUT US?"

ONE ADVENTURE AT A TIME, PLEASE.

I CAN'T WAIT!

HERO'S RIGHT.

BODY GETS GREEDY--

--BODY GETS CARELESS.

THINGS TURN BAD.

SEA-DOGS!

THEY'RE AWAKE!

A LOT'S HAPPENED WHILE YOU WERE DEALING WITH THE SHADOW KING, X-MAN.

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, ALL OF IT BAD!

WE'RE LEAVIN' YOU X-MEN THE OMEGA. HAVE FUN WITH THAT.

INSTEAD, WE'LL TAKE THIS ONE AND MAKE GOOD ON THE JOB YOU KEPT US FROM FINISHING BEFORE.

NEVER!

KILLIAN, DON'T! HE SAVED US--!

TOO LATE, HERO!

YOU'RE STORY'S DONE!

?*&

I'VE BEEN *STABBED* BEFORE.

I KNOW WHEN A WOUND'S *MORTAL.*

KURT!

TIME TO GO, *BLOODY BESS.*

NEVER AGAIN WITH YOU, KILLIAN--

--WE'RE *DONE!*

DON'T TALK LIKE A LOVESTRUCK *FOOL!*

SKARABOOM

CAREFUL, KILLIAN-- NIGHTCRAWLER'S *BAMFS* MAY BE LATE TO THE GAME...

...BUT THEY LOOK READY TO *FIGHT--*

NOT JUST THEM, *BROADSIDE--*

--THAT *LIGHTNING* MEANS THE *WEATHER-WITCH* IS BACK IN THE GAME AS WELL.

TIME FOR THE *CRIMSON PIRATES* TO CALL IT A DAY, ME LADS!

DON'T YOU WORRY, BESS. WE'LL BE SURE TO MEET AGAIN.

AN' ON THAT DAY, YOU CAN EITHER *JOIN* US...

...OR FOLLOW YOUR *SWEETHEART* TO THE *GRAVE.*

NIGHTCRAWLER-- NO!

PLEASE-- HELP US!

KURT--?!

THE SEA-DOGS DID HIM GOOD AND PROPER--

--I CAN BARELY FEEL A *PULSE.*

SORRY, ORORO--

--DIDN'T SEE THIS ONE... COMING.

DON'T TRY TO SPEAK.

YOUR *BAMFS* BROUGHT YOU HERE. THEY CAN TELEPORT YOU TO THE MANSION--!

TOO LATE...

I JUST LOST *LOGAN,* I WON'T LOSE YOU AS WELL.

NOT *YOUR* CALL.

DON'T WORRY, MY FRIENDS, I'VE WALKED THIS ROAD BEFORE. I KNOW WHAT'S COMING.

I'M GOING TO JOIN OLD *FRIENDS.*

I'M JUST SORRY THAT MEANS LEAVING OTHER FRIENDS BEHIND.

ONLY ONE *REGRET...*

...COULDN'T STOP THE *PIRATES...*

...SAVE THE *CHILDREN...**

THE PAIN IS GONE--

--JUST LIKE LAST TIME.

ONLY--THEN THERE WERE NO REGRETS.

RICO AND ZIGGY WERE *MY* RESPONSIBILITY.

AND I *FAILED* THEM.

GASP!

ALL ACROSS THE SKY--

--MORE *SPIRITS* THAN I CAN COUNT--

--FROM MORE *RACES* THAN I CAN IMAGINE!

IT'S SO-- *BEAUTIFUL!*

KURT!

SOMEONE'S CALLING MY NAME!

BESS?!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

YOU DON'T RUN OUT ON ME SO EASILY, BUSTER!

TAKE MY HAND!

I'M TAKING YOU BACK!

ARE YOU CRAZY?

ABSOLUTELY, ELF--

--THAT'S WHY I'M GONNA WIN!

BESS, IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT.

GOTCHA!

KURT, NO!
NO!
I'M SORRY, BESS--
--I CAN'T HOLD ON!
SHE'S-- GONE!
I DON'T KNOW THIS PLACE--WHERE AM I?
IS IT-- HEAVEN?
CONSIDER IT A WAY STATION ALONG THE ROAD.
AMANDA?!
IS IT TRULY YOU?
I TOLD YOU OUR STORY WASN'T DONE.
AND I SAID I WOULD FIND YOU, MY HEART, NO MATTER WHAT.

YOU SAID THIS WAS A "WAY STATION."

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN, EXACTLY?

WHY DO YOU KEEP LOOKING *BACK* OVER YOUR SHOULDER?

I HAVE STUDENTS-- *CHILDREN*-- ENTRUSTED TO MY CARE.

THEY'RE IN *DANGER*, THEY NEED MY HELP.

I HAD A *MOMENT* BEFORE I WAS STABBED.

PERHAPS I COULD HAVE *TELEPORTED* CLEAR.

BUT I DIDN'T.

AND NOW IT'S *TOO LATE.*

THERE'S *NOTHING* I CAN DO.

OH YE OF *LITTLE FAITH--!*

WHY ARE YOU *SMILING?*

YOU'RE RIGHT, MY DARLING, THIS ISN'T HEAVEN.

CONSIDER THIS ITS *BORDERLAND.*

DIFFERENT SET OF RULES, WAY MORE *POSSIBILITIES.*

I'M HERE FOR A REASON...

...I HAVE WORK TO DO.

AND THE SAME APPLIES TO YOU...ON *EARTH.*

BUT I *FAILED.* I WAS *KILLED.*

THAT, MY FRIEND, IS WHAT WE CALL A *"TECHNICALITY."*

UNGLAUBLICH!

WE'RE *X-MEN*, BUB. BREAKIN' RULES IS WHAT WE DO *BEST.*

YOU DON'T LIKE THE WAY THINGS TURNED OUT, GO BACK AND SET 'EM RIGHT.

DO WHAT THE X-MEN DO ***BEST:*** FIND A WAY TO ***WIN.***

BE FOR THOSE KIDS WHAT YOU'VE BEEN FOR ***ME,*** A KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR.

BUT--I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE YOU!

YOU'RE A ***HERO,*** MY LOVE. IT'S WHO YOU ARE, IT'S WHAT YOU DO.

HEROES DON'T ALWAYS GET WHAT THEY WANT.

THAT'S THE ***PRICE*** WE PAY FOR SAVING THE WORLD.

WE ARE NOT ***DONE*** YET, 'MANDA, NOT EVEN ***CLOSE!***

WHATEVER IT TAKES, I WILL ***FIND*** YOU.

WE WILL HAVE OUR ***HAPPY ENDING.***

THIS, I ***SWEAR.***

GOTCHA!

I'M BEING PULLED *BACK!*

THAT'S THE WAY IT GOES, SOMETIMES.

SAVE YOUR *KIDS*, KURT.

MAKE US ALL *PROUD!*

AMANDA!

I--

--I'M *ALIVE!*

YOU DON'T GET AWAY FROM ME *THAT* EASY, CUTIE!

I GUESS I'VE BEEN HANGIN' 'ROUND YOU GUYS FOR WAY TOO LONG.

I'M LIKE *YOU* NOW, I DON'T QUIT ANYMORE.

I FIND A WAY TO *WIN.*

WHAT HAPPENED?

A--A *MIRACLE?*

YOU SOUND *GREAT.*

I *FEEL* GREAT.

MY *WOUNDS*-- THEY'RE ALL *HEALED.*

SO-- WHAT NOW?

YOU CAME AFTER ME, BESS.

NOW, *WE* GO AFTER THE CHILDREN, TO BRING THEM SAFELY *HOME.*

WHATEVER YOU NEED, KURT, THE *X-MEN* STAND READY TO *HELP.*

THIS IS *OUR* FIGHT, ORORO.

SOMETHING BESS AND I NEED TO DO *OURSELVES.*

GO SAFEGUARD THE SCHOOL. WE ARE GOING TO BRING THE *CRIMSON PIRATES* TO JUSTICE--

--AND THEN DEAL ONCE AND FOR ALL WITH THEIR EMPLOYER, *TULLAMORE VOGE.*

NEXT: KIDS ON THE RUN!

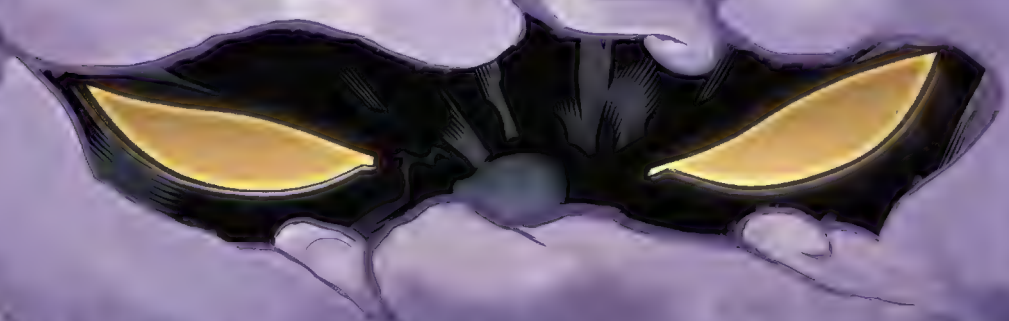
NIGHTCRAWLER
MARVEL
CLAREMONT
NAUCK
ROSENBERG
011

RECENTLY RETURNED FROM THE AFTERLIFE, NIGHTCRAWLER HAS BEEN SEARCHING FOR HIS PLACE IN A WORLD FAR DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE HE LEFT BEHIND.

PREVIOUSLY IN...

NIGHTCRAWLER

WHEN NIGHTCRAWLER RECEIVED A TELEPATHIC DISTRESS CALL FROM BLOODY BESS OF THE CRIMSON PIRATES, HE WAS TELEPORTED TO A DESERT IN CHINA. THERE, NIGHTCRAWLER WAS ATTACKED BY THE CRIMSON PIRATES, WHO THEMSELVES WERE POSSESSED BY THE EVIL SHADOW KING. WITH BESS'S ASSISTANCE, NIGHTCRAWLER MANAGED TO BEST THE SHADOW KING. FREE OF THE SHADOW KING'S INFLUENCE, THE CRIMSON PIRATES TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE CONFUSION IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE BATTLE AND KIDNAPPED TWO OF NIGHTCRAWLER'S STUDENTS, RICO AND ZIGGY KARST!



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WITH BLOODY BESS CHARTING OUR COURSE...
...THE BLACKBIRD CROSSES OVER THE DIMENSIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH EASE.
OUR DESTINATION IS THE SLAVE MARKET RUN BY TULLAMORE VOGE.
OUR PURPOSE IS TO RESCUE TWO KIDNAPPED STUDENTS FROM THE JEAN GREY SCHOOL, RICO AND ZIGGY KARST.
AFTER THE CHILDREN ARE SAFE, I INTEND TO BRING VOGE TO JUSTICE, ONCE AND FOR ALL.
TO THIS END, BESS HAS CHOSEN TO STAND WITH ME AGAINST HER TEAMMATES, THE CRIMSON PIRATES.
IN THAT, I AM JUST LIKE TWO OF MY BEST FRIENDS, JEAN GREY AND LOGAN.
ALL THREE OF US TORN BETWEEN LOVE AND PASSION.
MY HEART IS PLEDGED TO ANOTHER, AND YET--
--THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HER I CANNOT RESIST.
HOW THE FATES MUST LAUGH AT THE FOLLIES OF MEN.
READY, CUTIE?
BUT THESE ARE THOUGHTS FOR ANOTHER TIME.
ABSOLUTELY.
LET'S GO BE HEROES.

KIDS ON THE RUN!

BESS TOLD ME WHAT TO EXPECT-- BUT WORDS PALE BEFORE THE REALITY.

THEY'RE ALL *KIDS* LIKE US--

--AND THERE ARE SO *MANY!*

MUTANTS EVERY ONE, AYE--

--AN' ALL OF 'EM *SLAVES!*

VOGE OPERATES THROUGHOUT THE *OMNIVERSE.*

SO MANY WORLDS, TOO MANY PEOPLE--

--NOBODY MISSES A CHILD HERE OR THERE, EVEN ONE WITH *SUPER-POWERS.*

YOU CAN'T GET AWAY WITH THIS!

AND WHO'S TO STOP US, GIRL?
VOGE!
DID YOU REALLY THINK I'D ALLOW YOU TO ESCAPE ME?
WE'VE BEEN "GETTING AWAY" WITH THIS FOR GENERATIONS.
AND WILL CONTINUE DOING SO LONG AFTER YOU ARE BOTH DUST AND FORGOTTEN.
ALTHOUGH, LOOKING AT YOU NOW, I BEGIN TO WONDER WHY I BOTHERED.
YOU CAN TALK AS SMUG AS YOU LIKE, FATSO--
--WE BEAT YOU BEFORE, WE'LL DO IT AGAIN!
AND THIS TIME, WE'LL MAKE SURE YOU PAY FOR YOUR CRIMES!
HOLD YOUR TONGUE, BOY--
--OR LOSE IT!
GAK!
THE BOY HAS SPIRIT.
I HATE SPIRIT.
AND I START TO WONDER, KILLIAN, IF I WOULDN'T MAKE MORE PROFIT SELLING YOU PIRATES.
SAVE YOUR THREATS, SLAVEMASTER.
LET THE ENHANCER FIELD SHOW YOU WHAT THESE MUTANTS WILL BECOME WHEN THEY GROW UP.
ZIGGY--WHAT'S HAPPENING?
I FEEL SO STRANGE!

YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED.
IS THAT-- *US?*
WOW!
NOW *THAT'S* SOMETHING I CAN TURN A PROFIT ON!
SHALL WE START THE BIDDING?

EVERYONE'S PREOCCUPIED WITH THE BIDDING--
--NOW'S MY CHANCE!
?!?
GIRL MAKIN' SNEAKY MOVE?
BAD GIRL!
GUESS AGAIN, SEA DOG!
WHAMMO
YIKES!
BIG-BANG NAILED HIM. BUT NOW KILLIAN KNOWS SOMETHING'S UP!
ONLY GOT SECONDS NOW TO USE THE BABY-BANG TO SET ME FREE.
IT WORKED!
PWAM
?!?

000000000143
000000000097
HEADS UP, RICO!
YOUR TURN TO ROCK-'N'-RUN!
PWAMMO
WE'RE NOT JUST KIDS, PIRATE--
--WE'RE STUDENT X-MEN!
WE MAY LOSE--
--BUT WE NEVER QUIT!
PUNCH PUNCH PUNCH
PUNCH PUNCH
NICE MOVES, RICO.
NIGHTCRAWLER'S A GREAT TEACHER.
I WISH HE WAS HERE!
SPEAKING OF NICE MOVES, YOURS WERE GREAT!

EVERYTHING HAPPENED SO FAST IN CHINA, THE PIRATES NEVER SEARCHED US.
I GUESS THEY FIGURED KIDS DON'T PACK HARDWARE.
GOT A RADIO SO WE CAN CALL FOR HELP?
WHAT D'YA WANT FROM ME, PAL?
DO I HAVE TO THINK OF EVERYTHING?

JUST ASKING, IS ALL--'CAUSE WITHOUT A MIRACLE...
...WE'RE GONNA END UP JUST LIKE ALL THESE OTHER KIDS.

TRUST ME, RICO--
--I'M WORKING UP A PLAN.

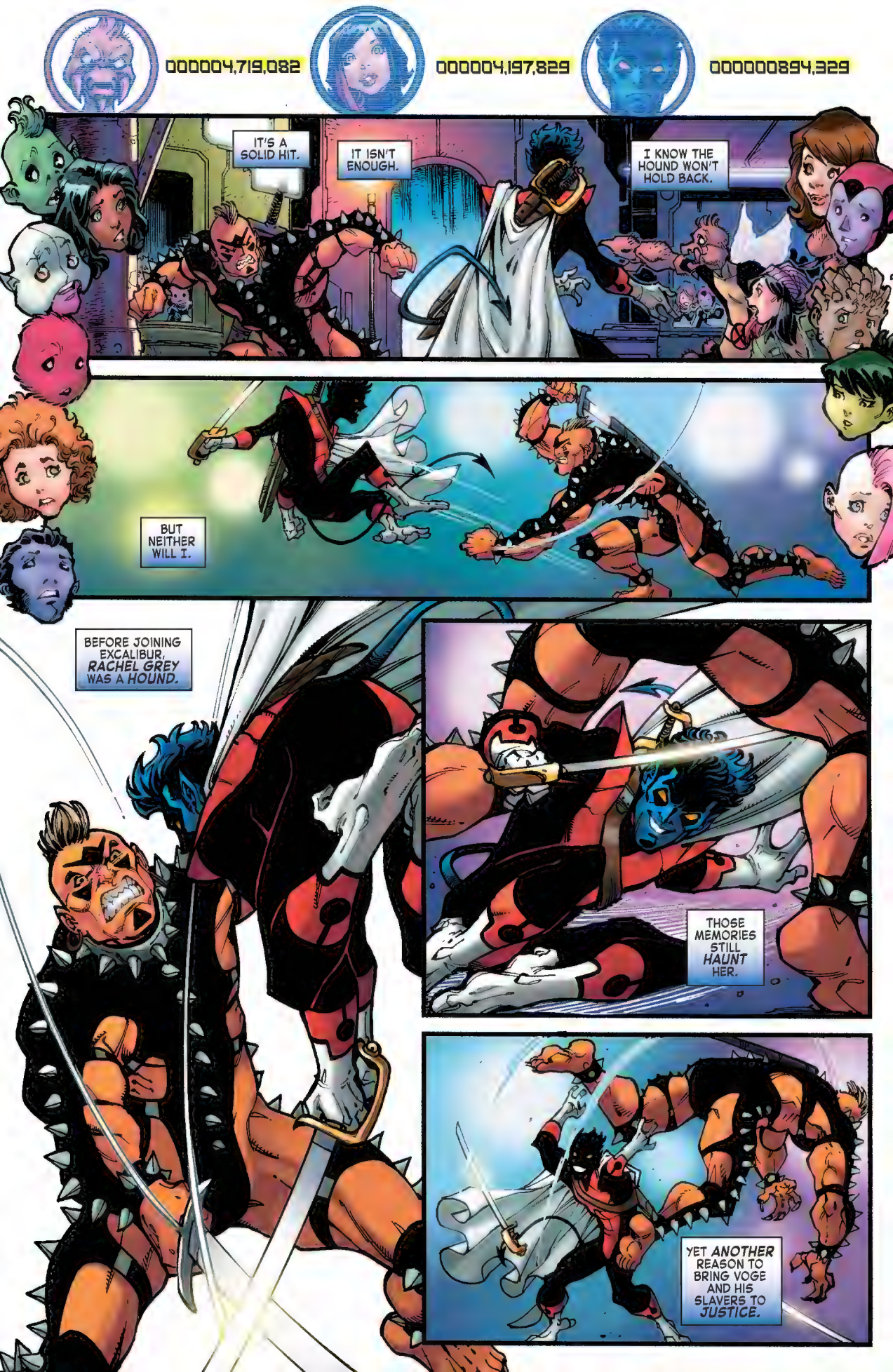
I SURE HOPE SO!
ESCAPED SLAVES!
HOUNDS-- SEIZE THEM!
'CAUSE WE'RE BUSTED!

000000429,733
000000391,207
WE'VE TRACKED, AN' CAUGHT, THESE TWO BEFORE, VOGE--
--WE'LL DO IT AGAIN.
SO YOU CAN LOSE THEM, YET AGAIN?
I'M NOT INTERESTED.
FINE THEN, WE CALL THIS QUITS, GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS.
CATCH 'EM YOURSELF.
SORRY, I'VE MADE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS.
ZAPOU
PUT THEM ON THE MARKET GRID; THEY SHOULD BRING A FAIR PRICE.
I TRUST YOU'LL DO BETTER.
WE'RE WARWOLVES, SLAVELORD.
WE DON'T FAIL.

STILL WAITING FOR THAT PLAN, ZIGGY!
STILL WORKING OUT THE DETAILS, RICO!
IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED, THERE ARE LOTS OF DISTRACTIONS!
NO POINT TRYING TO HIDE.
THIS PLACE IS USED TO RUNAWAYS.
THE HOUNDS LIKELY KNOW EVERY HIDEY-HOLE.
WE NEED SOMETHING BETTER!
ZIGGY'S DOING GREAT--
--BUT WE CAN'T KEEP THIS UP FOREVER!
NO MORE DEFIANCE, SLAVE! YOU WILL SUBMIT--!
PLEASE DON'T HURT ME!
I JUST WANT TO GO HOME!
SHE SOUNDS SO SCARED.
SHE NEEDS HELP!
AND ALL I'M DOING IS RUNNING AWAY.

000001,694,159
000001,718,327
ZAPPA
ZAPPA ZAPPA
ENOUGH WITH THE RUNNING--
--TIME TO START FIGHTING!
ONLY PROBLEM IS, I START SHOOTING AT THEM--
--THEY'LL LIKELY START SHOOTING BACK.
WHAT'S THAT SCREAMING?!
YOU CAN'T TAKE HER AWAY, SHE'S MY SISTER!
THOSE GIRLS ARE TERRIFIED--
--BUT THE SLAVERS ARE ALL LAUGHING.
TO THEM, IT'S JUST ANOTHER SALE.
THIS IS SO-- WRONG!
OW!

000002,547,031
000003,973,228
NO WORRIES, ZIGGY--I'VE GOT'CHER BACK!
GOOD THING I WAS WATCHING!
WHEN I START SHOOTING, RICO, GET READY TO RUN!
I SUSPECT, STUDENTS, THAT'S MY CUE.
MAY I LEND A HAND?
PROFESSOR WAGNER?
NIGHTCRAWLER?!


000004,719,082
000004,197,829
000000894,329
IT'S A SOLID HIT.
IT ISN'T ENOUGH.
I KNOW THE HOUND WON'T HOLD BACK.
BUT NEITHER WILL I.
BEFORE JOINING EXCALIBUR, RACHEL GREY WAS A HOUND.
THOSE MEMORIES STILL HAUNT HER.
YET ANOTHER REASON TO BRING VOGE AND HIS SLAVERS TO JUSTICE.

BIGGER YOU ARE, THE HARDER YOU FALL--SWEET DREAMS.
YOU'RE VERY GOOD AT TERRORIZING CHILDREN--
--NOT SO MUCH AGAINST THOSE WHO CAN FIGHT BACK.
WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM YOUR FRIENDS.
AS ALWAYS, MUCH APPRECIATED.
WE HAVE THE CHILDREN, BESS.
TIME TO GO-- OH!
YOU'RE GOING ON THE BLOCK, FOOL--
--OR INTO YOUR GRAVE!

000004,917,082
000005,197,829
000006,306,549
SO MUCH FOR OUR BEST LAID PLANS.
LOOKS LIKE, YET AGAIN, WE'RE FIGHTING FOR OUR LIVES.
BET YOU WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY.
NO FAIR, KNOWING ME SO WELL.
WHAT CAN I SAY? YOU'VE CHARMED THE PIRATE IN MY SOUL.
MUSIC TO MY EARS, SWEETIE!
THE WORDS ARE JUST BANTER; WHAT'S SCARY ARE THE EMOTIONS THAT UNDERLIE THEM.
THOSE FEELINGS ARE TOTALLY REAL--FOR US BOTH.
LOOKS LIKE THE BADDIES HAVE CALLED FOR HELP.

NORMALLY, AGAINST THESE ODDS, I'D TELEPORT.
BUT IT SEEMS THE INTERDIMENSIONAL TRAVEL HAS THROWN MY OWN ABILITY TO TRAVEL THROUGH SPACE FOR A LOOP.
IN TRUTH, THOUGH, I DON'T MIND ITS ABSENCE.
IT MAKES THIS KIND OF FIGHT A WHOLE LOT MORE FUN!
LOOK AT THE PROFESSOR GO!
WHEN YOU GROW UP, RICO--
--I BET YOU'LL BE EVEN BETTER!
OH-MY-GOSH, YOU BEAT 'EM ALL.
JUST THIS SMALL CONTINGENT.
BY THE TIME REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE, WE NEED TO BE LONG GONE.
BUT PROFESSOR WAGNER, WE CAN'T LEAVE.

000005,219,937
000005,219,737
000039,421,836
WE CERTAINLY CAN'T STAY, RICO. THAT'LL BE THE END OF US.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND--ALL THE CAPTIVES HERE ARE KIDS.
THEY'VE BEEN STOLEN FROM THEIR HOMES, THEY'RE BEING SOLD.
HOW CAN YOU TURN YOUR BACK ON THAT?
I KNOW IT SEEMS HARSH BUT OUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IS YOU TWO.
WE'LL GET YOU OUT OF HARM'S WAY AND THEN COME BACK FOR THEM.
AND WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS WHO GET SOLD IN THE MEANTIME?
WHAT'S THE PHRASE--ARE THEY JUST COLLATERAL DAMAGE?
YOU CAME FOR US--HOW CAN WE TURN OUR BACKS ON THEM?
I'M SORRY, NIGHTCRAWLER--HE'S RIGHT.
I STAND WITH RICO!
THEY'RE JUST KIDS.
THEY'RE IDEALISTS.
THEY'RE FOOLS.
THEY'RE RIGHT.
FINE, HAVE THIS YOUR WAY.
THE BAMFS WILL TELEPORT YOU TO THE BLACKBIRD. THERE, YOU'LL BE SAFE.
LEAVE THE REST TO US.

000005,227,737
NO WAY-- WE MAY BE KIDS BUT WE CAN STILL HELP.
WE STAND TOGETHER AGAINST EVIL.
WE REACH OUT OUR HAND TO PEOPLE WHO NEED IT AND WE PULL 'EM TO SAFETY.
ISN'T THAT WHY THE X-MEN WERE CREATED IN THE FIRST PLACE?
OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES--
--COMES A REMINDER OF MY OBLIGATIONS, NOT SIMPLY AS A HERO...
...BUT AS A MAN.
CAN I MEASURE UP TO THEM?
WHATEVER YOU DECIDE, SWEETIE--
--I'VE GOT YOUR BACK.
THIS ISN'T A GAME, YOU TWO.
YOU COULD BE HURT, OR DIE. OR WORSE.
WHAT ABOUT THESE KIDS?
THEY NEED ALL OF US.
IF THERE'S EVEN A CHANCE TO HELP THEM, IT'S WORTH ANY RISK.

ZIGGY'S A CHILD; SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT SHE'S SAYING.
BUT SO WAS KITTY WHEN SHE JOINED THE X-MEN.
HER YOUTH DIDN'T SLOW HER DOWN; IF ANYTHING IT MADE HER TRY ALL THE HARDER.
THESE TWO ARE SO MUCH LIKE HER.
ALL RIGHT, THEN...
...WE DO THIS AS A TEAM.
OUR PRIMARY TARGET IS THE HEAD SLAVER, TULLAMORE VOGE.
PROFESSOR WAGNER--
--BEHIND YOU!
BAMM

WHY DO I HAVE THE FEELING THINGS JUST GOT A WHOLE LOT *WORSE?*
YOU HAVE NO IDEA.
YOU KNOW THIS CREW?
WE HAVE A *HISTORY.*
BUT WE CAN *BEAT* 'EM, RIGHT?
YOU CAN SURE *TRY.*
WE'RE THE *WARWOLVES,* KID.
WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT A *LONG* TIME.
BEFORE WE'RE DONE, WE'RE GONNA TAKE YOUR *LIVES,* YOUR *POWERS,* AND YOUR VERY *SOULS!*
NEXT: SERIES END--
--THE HEROES RISE!

MARVEL

CLAREMONT
NAUCK
ROSENBERG

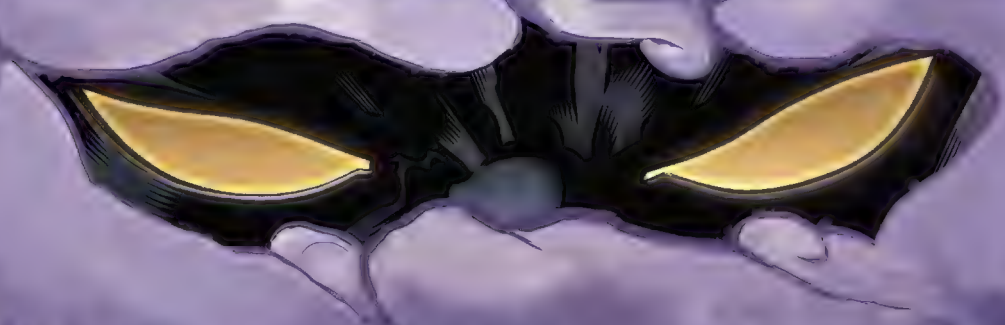
012

RECENTLY RETURNED FROM THE AFTERLIFE, NIGHTCRAWLER HAS BEEN SEARCHING FOR HIS PLACE IN A WORLD FAR DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE HE LEFT BEHIND.

PREVIOUSLY IN...

NIGHTCRAWLER

FOLLOWING A RECENT BATTLE, TWO OF NIGHTCRAWLER'S STUDENTS, RICO AND ZIGGY TRASK, WERE ABDUCTED AND DELIVERED TO TULLARMORE VOGE'S SLAVE MARKET. FOLLOWING THE KIDNAPPERS' TRAIL, NIGHTCRAWLER AND HIS NEW ALLY BLOODY BESS CAME TO THE STUDENTS' RESCUE. WHILE NIGHTCRAWLER SUCCEEDED IN LOCATING HIS STUDENTS, THEIR HAPPY REUNION WAS SHORT-LIVED...AS VOGE DISPATCHED THE VILLAINOUS WARWOLVES TO TAKE THE X-MEN PRISONER!



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I HATE *WARWOLVES.*

THEY WERE THE FIRST TRUE ADVERSARIES OF *EXCALIBUR* AND IN THAT BATTLE, VERY NEARLY STOLE THE SOUL AND BODY OF *KITTY PRYDE.*

THEY'RE *PREDATORS* WHO FEED ON THE LIFE-ESSENCE OF THEIR VICTIMS AND THEN WEAR THEIR *SKINS* LIKE A NEW SUIT OF CLOTHES.

THEY'RE RIGHT AT HOME WORKING FOR *TULLAMORE VOGE.*

AND *WE* ARE THEIR LATEST *PREY.*

WE'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR OUR *VENGEANCE,* MUTANT.

NOT HERE, WARWOLF--AND NOT IN THIS LIFETIME.

THE HEROES RISE!

MUCH HAS HAPPENED SINCE I CAME BACK TO LIFE--NOT ALL OF IT PLEASANT.
FOR TOO LONG I KEPT MY FEELINGS UNDER A TIGHT HOLD, ALMOST LIKE I WAS AFRAID OF THE CONSEQUENCES SHOULD I RELEASE THAT GRIEF AND RAGE.
AGAINST THE WARWOLVES, I CAST OFF ALL RESTRAINT.
I HAVE LOST TOO MANY OF THOSE I CARE FOR.
I WILL LOSE NO MORE.
KIDS-- TIME FOR YOU TO GO!
THE BAMFS'LL GET YOU SAFELY TO THE BLACKBIRD.
LEAVE THE BADDIES TO US!
BESS HAS GONE ASTRAL; SHE'S SPEAKING TO US TELEPATHICALLY WHILE SHE FIGHTS!
LET US STAY, WE WANT TO HELP!
THIS IS NO TIME FOR AN ARGUMENT!
THE WARWOLVES CHANGE EVERYTHING!
I NEED YOU TO TRUST ME AND DO AS YOU'RE TOLD: NOW GO!
NO BACK TALK, RICO?
ARE YOU KIDDING, ZIGGY?
I'VE NEVER SEEN PROFESSOR WAGNER SO SERIOUS.

YOU STILL SOUND PRETTY STEAMED.
IS THAT REALLY A SURPRISE?
JUST TAKE A LOOK AROUND.
THEY'RE KIDS, ZIGGY--JUST LIKE US!
ONLY WE GET TO RUN AWAY--TO GO HOME SAFE AN' SOUND--
--AND THEY'RE ALL STILL SLAVES!
I'M SORRY, BUT THAT SUCKS!
AND I'M NOT GONNA STAND FOR IT.
I WON'T ABANDON THESE KIDS--ANY MORE THAN THE X-MEN WOULD ABANDON US!
YOU HAVE A PLAN?
OH, YEAH--TULLAMORE VOGE RUNS THIS NIGHTMARE. BRING HIM DOWN, WE MIGHT JUST UPSET HIS WHOLE APPLECART!
Y'KNOW--THAT'S SO CRAZY IT MIGHT JUST WORK!
LET'S DO IT!

KURT, WE GOT A PROBLEM.
I KNOW, THE BAMFS JUST TOLD ME! THE KIDS ARE HUNTING DOWN VOGE THEMSELVES.
NOT A BAD IDEA, ACTUALLY. I WISH WE COULD HELP.
UNFORTUNATELY, A FAR MORE PRESSING...
...AND IMMEDIATE CONCERN...
...IS OUR OWN BASIC SURVIVAL.

I HIT HIM HARD--
--BUT ALL I DID WAS MAKE HIM MAD!
STAND STILL, CURSE YA'S!
YOU WANT ME TO MAKE THIS EASY?
I DON'T THINK SO.
I GOT HIM!
ZUT!
--NOW YOU'RE GONNA HURT!
OW!
THIS IS THE MOMENT I BEEN WAITIN' FOR!
TRUST ME, MUTIE--
HOPEFULLY, THE WARWOLF'S PUNCH WILL HAVE MORE OF AN IMPACT THAN MINE!
KURT-- HELP ME!

BESS!
GOTCHA NOW, CUTIE!
YOUR TOYS WON'T WORK AGAINST MY GHOST-WOLVES.
I'LL HOLD Y' FAST--
--WHILE THEY DRAIN THE LIFE RIGHT OUTTA YA!
STOP IT!
YOU'RE KILLING HER!
THAT'S THE IDEA, DUH-HEAD!
JUST LIKE WE'RE GONNA KILL YOU!

WHY IS THIS TAKING SO LONG?
THOSE CRETINS PROMISED ME QUICK RESULTS!
BAMF!
SOMETIMES, SLAVEMASTER, FATE HAS BETTER IDEAS.
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF
MY GUARDS--!
FOOLISH BOY, THERE'S STILL ONE LEFT.
KILL THE FREAK!
SLICE YOU WIDE, I WILL!

WANNA BET?
I AIN'T THE ONE WHO'S ON HIS BACK, BRAT.
AIN'T NOTHIN' YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT, NEITHER.
STOP BLATHERING, WRETCH--
--JUST KILL HIM!
HOLDIN' MY HANDS WON'T SAVE YA--
--I'LL JUST CRUSH THE LIFE RIGHT OUTTA YA!
ACTUALLY, I GOT A BETTER IDEA--
--USING MY TAIL!
WBAM

RUNNING AWAY, SLAVEMASTER?
I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T SCARED OF KIDS.
FAR AS YOU'RE CONCERNED, WE'RE ALL JUST PROPERTY.
WORDS ARE CHEAP, BOY.
YOU'RE NO KILLER.
FOR THE LIKES OF YOU, VOGE--
WHAT--?!
--THERE ARE WORSER FATES.
BAMF
THE BLACKBIRD.
WHERE--??
LOCKED UP. AND YOU BETTER GET USED TO IT, VOGE.
YOUR TURN NOW TO BE A CAPTIVE.
YOU'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS.
WHO'S GONNA STOP US?

WILL YOU IDIOTS GET A PROPER GRIP ON THE FLESH BAG!
HE'S WIGGLING TOO HARD!
HE'S NOT LETTING US DRAIN HIS LIFE-ENERGY!
THAT'S THE IDEA!
NO MORE FOOLING.
BESS IS FADING FAST.
SHE'S STILL FIGHTING BUT SHE'S ALMOST BEYOND THE POINT OF NO RETURN!
ONCE WE FINISH THESE TWO, WE GO AFTER THEIR KIDS!
VOGE WON'T LIKE THAT.
DO I LOOK LIKE I CARE?
I CLAIM THE NIGHTCRAWLER'S SKIN!
I'D BE VERY CAREFUL IF I WERE YOU.
REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU TRIED TO CLAIM KITTY?
OPEN-WIDE, YOU SLUDGE!
'CAUSE LIKE IT OR NOT--
--I'M COMING THROUGH!
YOU'RE-- SCARED!
TOTAL WIMP!
AM NOT!
IT'S JUST, WITH MUTANTS-- WEIRD THINGS HAPPEN.

DON'T BE SUCH AN-- UWRK!?!
WRAP
YANK
UH-OH!
KLONK
HANG ON, BESS!
I'M NOT LETTING YOU GO!
BETTER HAVE A PLAN, ELF!
AND YOU BETTER BE QUICK!
I CAN'T HOLD ON MUCH LONGER!
THE GIRL'S ALMOST DONE.
YOU DEAL WITH THE MUTIE!
NO PROBLEM.
THERE'S NO MARGIN OF ERROR, NO HOPE OF ANY DO OVER.
MY EVERY MOVE NOW HAS TO BE PERFECT.

WHAT?!
WRAPAWRAP
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!
KATHUMP
GREAT MOVE, LOVER.
BUT MY BODY'S RIGHT ON THE EDGE OF OBLIVION.
I CAN'T HOLD OUT ANY LONGER.
YOU WON'T HAVE TO.
YOU WANNA SAVE THE GIRL, MUTANT--
--YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TA BEAT US FIRST!
THAT'S THE PLAN.
HEY!
WRAPAWRAP

GUESS WHAT, MUTIE?
I'M STILL FREE--
--YOUR PLAN'S A BUST!
WANNA BET?
I COME FROM THE CIRCUS.
ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS I LEARNED WAS HOW TO LASSO WILD ANIMALS.
THIS ISN'T FAIR!
AND WRAP 'EM UP TIGHT SO THEY CAN'T ESCAPE.
I CAN'T HEAR BESS'S VOICE INSIDE MY HEAD ANYMORE.
AND THE TELEPATHIC IMAGES SHE'S BEEN SENDING ME ARE STARTING TO FADE!
HER BODY APPEARS LITTLE MORE THAN SKIN AND BONES.
HEAR MY THOUGHTS, BESS-- HOLD ON!
AS GOD IS MY WITNESS--
--I WILL NOT LET YOU DIE!

I'M NOT A TELEPATH, BESS. I CAN'T REACH YOU THAT WAY.
EVEN WITH MY POWER, I CAN'T TELEPORT BEYOND THE BEYOND.
ALL I CAN OFFER IS MY WILL.
HEAR MY VOICE, BESS.
I WILL BE YOUR ANCHOR, I WILL BRING YOU HOME!
REACH OUT TO MY SOUL AND GRAB HOLD.
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.
ALL WE CAN DO NOW IS PRAY.
HER FATE IS TRULY IN THE HANDS OF GOD.
GRRRRR!
I WILL NOT STAND FOR THIS.
I DID NOT RETURN FROM THE BEYOND JUST TO SEE MY FRIENDS TAKE MY PLACE.
I WILL NOT HAVE MY HEART BROKEN AGAIN.
MUSIC TO MY EARS, LOVER.
YOU'RE ALIVE!
YOU NOTICED.
I'LL DO FAR MORE THAN THAT.
OH YES PLEASE!
WAY TO GO, NIGHTCRAWLER!
GUYS, WILL YA PLEASE GET A ROOM?!
BAMF
BAMF
BAMF

YOU HEARD ME.
WAY YOU WERE YELLIN', IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO.
ELF, YOU LITERALLY WOKE THE--
KURT, LOOK OUT!
BAMF
HE TELEPORTED!
NO MATTER-- I CAN STILL FEAST ON THE CHILDREN!
NOT EVEN IN YOUR DREAMS, SLUG.
JUST BE THANKFUL NIGHTCRAWLER'S A GOOD INFLUENCE ON ME.
OTHERWISE, I'D HAPPILY TEAR YOU APART.
TRUTH TO TELL, I THINK I'D HELP.
BUT THAT WOULDN'T BE A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR THE CHILDREN.
WE WON THIS BATTLE, KURT.
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
WE GOT VOGE IN A CELL ABOARD THE BLACKBIRD. DOES THAT HELP?
SNEAKY KIDS--I LIKE THAT.
I SAY-- LET'S GO WIN THE WAR...
...AND SET THESE CHILDREN FREE!

IT ISN'T AN EASY STRUGGLE...
...AND IT TAKES TIME.
BUT IN THE END--
--HEROES PREVAIL.
ZIGGY AND RICO--AND BESS--RETURN HOME SAFE WITH ME.
MANY OF THE STOLEN CHILDREN ARE RETURNED SAFELY TO THEIR HOMES AS WELL.
FOR SOME, THOUGH, THERE ARE NEITHER HOMES NOR FAMILIES TO BE FOUND.
THE SLAVERS WERE TOO RUTHLESS.
THEY CAN CONSIDER THE COST OF THOSE CRIMES IN PRISON--FOR THE REST OF THEIR UNNATURAL LIVES.
THAT A NEW LOOK, RICO?
SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME, STORM.
PROFESSOR WAGNER FELT WE'D EARNED IT.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
TAGGING THE BLACKBIRD--
--SLAVERS WE BUSTED AND THE KIDS WE RESCUED.
ANYONE WHO MESSES WITH US IS GONNA KNOW THEY'RE IN TROUBLE.
THIS IS A SERIOUS CHOICE. ARE YOU SURE?
ABSOLUTELY!
KURT HAS TAUGHT YOU WELL.
AS CHARLES XAVIER TAUGHT US.
YOU SHOULD BOTH BE PROUD.
TOGETHER, YOU HAVE BOTH MADE A DIFFERENCE.

WHERE'S THAT?
A VERY PRIVATE HIDEAWAY.
NAUGHTY LAD.
SHE SAVED MY LIFE, BETSY.
YOU SAVED HERS, BOYO. DOESN'T THAT MAKE YOU EVEN?
THERE'S A BOND BETWEEN US.
WHAT ABOUT AMANDA?
DIFFERENT BOND, NO LESS REAL.
I WILL TRUST IN FATE THAT THINGS WILL WORK OUT HAPPILY FOR US ALL.
BUT YOU CAME BACK ALONE.
VOGE SOLD THE CRIMSON PIRATES AS SLAVES.
BESS WENT LOOKING FOR THEM.
ONCE THEY'RE FREE, WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT BETWEEN US.
SHE IS, AFTER ALL, A PSYCHOTIC KILLER.
MEANTIME, I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MY OWN...

OF COURSE, I WORRY.
I OFFERED TO HELP. BESS REFUSED.
HER PATH WAS NOT MINE, SHE SAID. AND SHE MUST WALK IT ALONE.
MY MIND ACCEPTS HER ARGUMENT.
MY HEART--WORRIES.
WHAT CAN I SAY? I MAY BE BOTH MUTANT AND X-MAN...
...BUT AT THE BEDROCK--FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE--I AM A CHILD OF GOD.
AS SUCH, I MUST FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF MY FRIENDS ...
...AND USE MY ABILITIES TO TRY TO MAKE OUR WORLD BETTER.
AND THIS IS WHO WE DO IT FOR, THE NEXT GENERATION.
TO GIVE THEM A FUTURE WORTHY OF THEIR POTENTIAL.
WE'RE HERE, PROFESSOR WAGNER, JUST LIKE YOU ASKED!
US AND ALL THE NEWBIES WE RESCUED.
THANKS TO YOU BOTH, RICO AND ZIGGY.
YOU TWO AND RACHEL COME OUT ONTO THE FIELD WITH ME.
THIS GAME WILL BE US AND THE BAMFS VERSUS EVERYONE ELSE.

MY FRIENDS, IT'S TIME TO INTRODUCE YOU ALL TO AN OLD AND CLASSIC X-MEN TRADITION.
AS SUPER HEROES, WE'RE OFTEN CALLED ON TO FIGHT EVIL AND SAVE THE WORLD.
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE CAN'T HAVE FUN.
PLEASE ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE YOU TO WHAT A DEAR FRIEND CALLED "THE FASTBALL SPECIAL."
MY NAME IS KURT WAGNER.
ALSO KNOWN AS NIGHTCRAWLER.
AND HERE IS WHERE I START TO MAKE OUR WORLD BETTER.
A BEGINNING!

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